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TRACTS
AND
SERMONS
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

By the Reverend
RICHARD VENN, A. M.
Late Rector of St. Antholin's, London.



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TO THE
SUBSCRIBERS.

THE liberal Encouragement which you have given to the Publication of the following Sheets demands the most Public Gratitude of the Widow and Children of the deceased Author.

Permit me to say, that the Obligation is greatly heightened, by the Consideration, that your Bounty, thus shewn to *Us*, carries with it an honourable Testimony of Regard to *his Memory*, which must ever be dear to those who, whilst he lived, were happy in the best of Husbands, and the best of Fathers.

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To the SUBSCRIBERS.

The Reason of my publishing his Sermons, which were never by him prepared, or intended, for the Press, will as naturally suggest it self to *the Public*, as it has been generously understood by *You*; and will, I hope, atone for the Inaccuracies, or other greater Faults (if such there are) which may appear in them. I am, *with the greatest Respect,*

Your most obliged,

and most humble Servant,

MARY VENN.

King *G E O R G E's*
T I T L E
A S S E R T E D :
O R, A
L E T T E R
T O
A FELLOW of a College
In *C A M B R I D G E*;

S H E W I N G
The L A W F U L N E S S of the O A T H S
required by the present Government, upon
Principles equally received by all Parties.

Written in the Y E A R 1715.

KNOWLEDGE

THE

WISDOM

OF

A FELLOWSHIP

IN

THE

ARTS

AND

SCIENCE

OF

THE

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD

IN

THE

REIGN

OF

THE



T H E
P R E F A C E.

I*S none of the least of those Misfortunes, that have befallen the Nation since the Death of our Excellent Queen (but perhaps 'tis in a great Measure the Cause of most of them) that there has appear'd a great Alteration in many Men's Sentiments about the Lawfulness of the present Establishment.*

'Tis notorious, that very few scrupled the acknowledging the Queen's Title; and yet 'tis as notorious, that his present Majesty has the very same Title, fix'd on the same Foundation, and supported by the same Circumstances. However, I believe (tho' we do not suppose, that so many have receiv'd new Light all at once; which notwithstanding is perhaps the Case of several) there may be some general Reasons assign'd for this strange Turn. As

First, It is both his Majesty's and the Nation's Misfortune, that he drew his first Breath in another Country. Mr. L—t in his

The P R E F A C E.

Memoirs of Scotland has been (I'm afraid, with too much Reason) severe upon the English Nation for their Contempt of Foreigners. And whoever will look into Mr. Osborn's Memoirs, will find as much bitter Satire upon King James the First, to welcome him into England, as I believe his present Majesty has met with since his Arrival. England indeed may be justly sensible, that she enjoys the distinguishing Favours of Providence: But that Consideration ought to produce a Return of another Nature.

Secondly, *The Opinion of the Chevalier's Legitimacy, which a certain Party, (for Ends best known to themselves) have with so much Industry and Success persuaded the People to entertain, is in Fact (tho' it ought not to be so in Reason) no small Disadvantage to King GEORGE's Interest. For it has been observ'd to be the Genius of the English to have so constant a Veneration for (what they think) Proximity of Blood, that even a true Title which has wanted that, has usually met with some Disturbance. Thus, tho' the House of York had by the most solemn Oaths, and manifest Cessions, vested an evident Right in the House of Lancaster; Henry VI. found he had better have had Proximity of Blood without*

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without any Title, than the best Title without that.

Thirdly, Since the Government has been depriv'd of its old Support, arising from the Doubtfulness of the Chevalier's Birth, it has been too often defended upon wild and unwarrantable Principles; so inconsistent with the Nature of Government, that 'tis impossible they should be true; and so difficult to be traced, that, were they true, they are unintelligible to most Capacities. Thus, while on one side the People were taught, that they might resist the supreme Power as often as they judged it convenient; and on the other side they were persuaded, that the Pretender was King James's undoubted Son; 'tis no Wonder, that (both their Principles and Inclinations being alter'd) cunning Men should persuade them to make use of their supposed Authority, and turn it even upon some of those that first gave it them.

In this Juncture I thought it my Duty to prove, from Principles resulting from the Nature of Government, and consistent with the Doctrine of the Church of England, that King GEORGE has an undoubted Title to these Realms. And I'm sure, whoever would fix it upon a Bottom, that could only be ad-

mitted by one Party, can never justly be reckon'd a Friend to his Succession. An Argument of this Nature must be somewhat difficult: Whereas the Chevalier's Pretensions are much more easy to be apprehended. But it must be remembered, that those Reasonings which are most obvious, are not always most conclusive.

I have too much Honour for the Church of England, to believe that all her Bishops and Clergy have for Twenty-seven Years been supporting a Rebellion. She must doubtless make a strange Figure in History, if it shall be recorded of her, that at a Time when her Sons had carried true Learning, and exact Reasoning, to a Height they never before were brought to, she was all the while deeply guilty of a Crime, which she above all others detests and abhors. But if she has been hitherto innocent, I believe there will be no other Reason found sufficient to justify our present Distractions. For I'm sure, whatever Dangers the Church should be brought into, she would not chuse to be reliev'd by the Remedy of Rebellion; and should there ever be occasion (which, I hope, God and his Majesty will prevent) I'm resolv'd rather to suffer with her, than rebel for her.





King G E O R G E's

T I T L E Asserted :

O R,

A L E T T E R, &c.

Dear S I R,



OURS I receiv'd; and I am heartily sorry to find that you labour under such Difficulties as will (unless speedily remov'd) not only make your Fellowship void, and banish one from the College, who (without a Compliment) is an Ornament to it; but also make it impossible for you to do the

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Service

Service you are capable of in our excellent Church, for which you have so great and just a Zeal.

You are pleased to command my Assistance, by professing yourself not barely willing, but much inclin'd, to hear what I can offer in behalf of the present Settlement, which you know me to be so thoroughly satisfy'd with. And therefore, whatever the Success may be, I will use my best Endeavours to make you easy, and reconcile you to King GEORGE's Government; only I must beg you to consider how short a Time you have allow'd me to draw up my Thoughts upon so weighty a Subject, and for that Reason to excuse that Incorrectness of Stile, which must necessarily attend so hasty a Composition. If my Arguments will hold good, as 'tis all that I shall propose, so 'tis all that you need desire. I can truly say, they are such as appear to me, upon the most serious Consideration, to be strictly conclusive; and I do assure you, I would not have presumed to give my Opinion of so important a Case of Conscience, if I had not examin'd it with all the Care and Exactness I am Master of.

Thus

Thus much by way of Introduction. I shall now address myself to the Matter before me; and I doubt not but you will think yourself bound, as a *Christian* and an *Englishman*, to peruse what I write with the utmost Impartiality.

In order to discover the Validity of a Prince's Title, 'tis necessary to consider what Force it derives either from that Authority which was the first Foundation of it, or from its present Nature and Circumstances: In either of which Views, if we consider King *GEORGE*'s Title, I hope to make it appear that he has a just Right and Claim to our Allegiance. Now that King *GEORGE*'s Title is built upon the Foundation of a just Authority will be manifest, if I can prove these following Propositions.

First, That at the Time of the Revolution, the *Chevalier*'s Birth was doubted of by the *English* Nation.

Secondly, That on that Occasion the States of the Realm had Power to determine the Controversy about the Succession.

Thirdly, That the Determination then made still remains in Force, tho' the States
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King GEORGE's

were at that Time mistaken in their Opinion of the *Chevalier's* Birth.

As for the First Proposition, *viz. That at the Time of the Revolution the Chevalier's Birth was doubted of by the English Nation*; I might very reasonably take it for granted, as a Thing universally known and allow'd of. I am sure it will be needless to *prove* it to such Persons as remember that Time. The Opinion of the Nation was then sufficiently notorious. Even some of the Clergy, who were afterwards Nonjurors, as well as others that comply'd, refused at that Time to own and pray for him: And as for the rest of the Clergy who pray'd for him, most of them did not do it, because they did not doubt of his Birth, but because they were of Opinion, that their private Suspicions ought not to influence their publick Proceedings, till they had some competent Authority to countenance them; and that in a dubious Case the Command of the King (till the Matter was examin'd) ought to be submitted to. However, the Case seems now to be very much alter'd, and the greatest Part of the Nation (some on one View, some on another) seem willing, whether they can or cannot reconcile it with the present Establishment, to
admit

admit the *Chevalier's* Legitimacy. Wherefore for fear that you, who have been bred up since the Revolution, should imagine that the People entertain'd the same Opinion *then*, as they have been *since* willing to receive, it may be necessary to shew you briefly, what was the general Notion the Nation then had of this Affair, and how they came to have such a Notion.

That the Nation did doubt of the *Chevalier's* Birth at that Time, appears from most unquestionable Evidence. Mr. *Lesly* himself, who (in his *Right of Monarchy asserted*, printed at *London* in the Year 1713) has been very severe upon the Archbishop of *Dublin*, for saying of the Birth of the Prince of *Wales*, *We are satisfy'd that 'tis a Cheat*, p. 13. And again, that it was *not so much as a well contriv'd Cheat*, p. 55. complains in his Answer to that Archbishop's *State of the Protestants in Ireland*, p. 111. that the *Dublin* Clergy being met by Order of King *James*, *tho' they did not believe the Reality of the Prince of Wales, yet resolv'd to pray for him*; and he charges them upon that Account, *with presuming to act the Hypocrite with God, and pray against their Consciences, rather than displease the King*. And

in his before-mention'd *Right of Monarchy* asserted, he makes this Observation: *But by this time I suppose, like the rest of those Times, he (viz. the Archbishop) is of another Opinion; and especially since the Record of the Prince's Birth stands unrevers'd to this Day, p. 13.*

In the Debates at large between the two Houses of the Convention, the chief Reason why they insisted on the Vacancy of the Throne was, because (King James being declar'd to have deserted it) they could not tell of whom, as Heir, it was full. You cannot (says Sir G. T—y, p. 150.) say the Throne is full. If there be a Doubt to you, to be sure, it is not like to be evident to us, especially in this Case, considering who your Lordships are. You are the Persons that usually are, or ought to be, present at the Delivery of our Queens, and the proper Witnesses to the Births of our Princes. If then your Lordships had known who was on the Throne, we should certainly have heard his Name from you, and that had been the best Reason against the Vacancy as could have been given. And in p. 148. he supposes the Chevalier's Title to be as dubious, as that of two Persons kept so long in one Room, till no one alive could tell

tell which was which. *One of them (says he) must be eldest: But by reason of the Uncertainty, must not an Election be made of them? And could any thing else do but an Election?*

The Earl of N—m allows this Instance, (p. 169.) but draws a different Conclusion. *I would only ask that Gentleman (says he) whether in that Case he would say the Throne were vacant. Certainly there would have been one in the Throne: But then it followeth, that tho' there should be an Uncertainty of the particular Person, yet that would not infer a Necessity that the Throne should be vacant.*

In p. 172, Mr. P. F—y compares the present Case with that of the failing of the whole Royal Line. He complains that *the Successor is not known. We are without a King (says he) I am sure I don't know of any that we have.* Sir R. H—d complains very much of the Uncertainty of the Chevalier's Birth, and the Impossibility at that Time of making it clearer. *If the Heir had certainly been known (says he, p. 132.) your Lordships would not have assembled without his Calling.* And afterwards, p. 133. *We know of none that possesses the Throne.*
We

We know some such thing hath been pretended to as an Heir Male, of which there are different Opinions, and in the mean time we are without a Government: And must we stay till the Truth of the Matter be found out? What shall we do to preserve our Constitution, while we are without a safe or legal Authority, to act under the same according to that Constitution, and in a little Time it will perhaps, through the Distraction of our Constitution, be utterly irremediable? I don't deny but that your Lordships have very great Hardships to conflict with in this Case. But who is the Occasion of them? We all know the Monarchy is hereditary; but how or what shall we do to find out the Successor in the right Line? And in p. 134. you think it will be a difficult Thing to go upon the Examination who is Heir.—I confess, I say, there are Difficulties of all Sides, or else your Lordships, sure, would have spoke out before now: And if you had been clear in it yourselves, you would have let the Commons and the World have known it. But it not being clear, must we always remain thus? Use what Words you will, fill up, or nominate, or elect, it is the Thing we are to take care of, and 'tis high Time it were done. And p. 138. Your Lordships

ships it seems cannot agree with us to fill up this Gap in the Government, or tell us who is the Successor.

To all these bold Challenges of the Managers for the Commons, the Lords reply only by denying the Consequence as to the Vacancy of the Throne. *You, Gentlemen (says the Earl of P——e, p. 108.) ask us who the Throne is full of. I think 'tis sufficient to know that there are Heirs, who are to take by lineal Succession, tho' WE DO NOT OR CANNOT positively name the particular Person; and therefore we may well conclude there is no Vacancy.* And then he compares the Case to that of two Men in a Room, of whom we cannot distinguish the one from the other.

In short, King *James* himself, in his Reasons for withdrawing himself from *Rochester*, owns that the Prince of Orange's Arts, and especially that (which he calls) *the greatest Aspersions that Malice could invent*, in that Clause of the Declaration which related to his Son, had occasion'd a general Defection in the Army, as well as in the Nation, among all sorts of People. And a late *very remarkable* Paper, dated O. S. *Jan. 3. 1714.* attributes it to *Time and the visible.*

visible Hand of Providence, that some bellish and absurd Calumnies have been baffled and expos'd, and that many of the most eminent Opposers of the Chevalier's Legitimacy have been oblig'd (at last) to acknowledge his Right of Blood and hereditary Title.

I might have insisted, that this was the general Strain which ran through all the Pamphlets written about that Time; and that all our Histories have attested the same Thing. But I chose rather barely to mention those great and unexceptionable Authorities, to prove what was the general Notion the Nation *then* had of that Affair.

I shall now consider how they came to entertain such a Notion. King *William's* Answer to the *Memorials* offer'd at the Treaty of *Reswyck* by the late King *James*, gives this Account of it, p. 20. *It was the late King's own Conduct that gave just Cause of Jealousy in this Matter. No Satisfaction was offer'd, neither to those who were most immediately concern'd, as being next in Succession, nor to the rest of the Nation; which yet might have been done in a Way that could not have admitted of a Doubt, if there was no Imposture design'd in the whole Conduct of that Affair. This gave an universal Suspicion,*

cion, which was so publick during the Time when it was given out that the late Queen was with Child, that the whole Nation was possess'd with it. And since nothing was done to give them any just Satisfaction in a Matter of that Importance, and which might have been so easily perform'd, and was so much their own Interest to have done, this gave a violent Presumption against them, that such an unaccountable Management was necessary to cover a black Contrivance.

But we shall be able to form a better Judgment of this Matter, if we consider the Circumstances of the Birth, and the Temper of our Nation at that Time. *The Fears of a Protestant Successor* (says a late Writer of *Memoirs*) *had been the only Allay that rendred the Prosperity of the Roman Catholicks less perfect. Now the Happiness of having an Heir to the Crown to be bred up in their own Religion, quash'd all those Fears, and aton'd for the Uncertainty of the King's Life. It was so much their Interest to have one, and there were so many Circumstances to render his Birth suspicious, that the Nation in general were inclinable to believe that this was the last Effort of the Party to accomplish our Ruin.* The Story of Queen Mary's

big Belly (which too was thought to be design'd to hinder a Protestant Successor) was still fresh on the Peoples Minds; and the Usage our Nation had then receiv'd from the Papists was such, as made us think them capable of any Villany. We plainly saw their *All* depended on the King's having a Son; and the Nation was very well satisfy'd their Principles would give them Leave to accomplish whatever their Interest dictated. Those Passages in their *Councils*, and their constant Maxims, which direct them in what manner Hereticks are to be treated (which tho' they have been soften'd by some private Men, have never been authoritatively explain'd or condemn'd) made us expect any Wickedness from a *Popish* Party; and we had but little Reason left to doubt, when we consider'd that that Party were *Jesuits*, who are as much worse in their Principles and Practices than any other *Roman Catholics*, as the *Roman Catholics* are than the Reform'd. We had little Reason therefore, when the Care the Civil Law takes, and the Customs of many Nations provide, that there may be no supposititious Birth, and yet Instances out of Histories; nay even of our

own *, shew us that there have been such Births ; we had little Reason, I say, to trust to the Management of *Jesuits*, who are always ready *by* Principle to act what the rest of Mankind sometimes do *against* Principle. Every one knows the King was entirely in the Hands of the *Jesuits* ; he had condescended to be one of their Society, and was by their Persuasion so much a *Papist*, that he forc'd even the *Pope* himself in his Management to become a *Protestant*.

This Scene of Affairs made the Protestants very Uneasy, and their Uneasiness was very well known at Court. Their Jealousies had been notified to the Government, as plainly as *Protestant* Subjects durst notify so tender a Point to a *Popish* Government : And the Spreaders of one Pamphlet, *viz.* the *Reflections* on M. H. Fagel's Letter, wherein the Pregnancy is grossly ridicul'd, were prosecuted upon that Account. Notwithstanding all this, the King thought fit to give us no Satisfaction at the Time of the Birth, which was contrary to Reason, as well as to Practice in parallel Cases.

* See *Siderfin's Reports*, Temp. Car. 2. p. 377, 378.

'Twas contrary to Reason, because the Law of Reason or Nature (which is the same Thing) gives no one a Dominion over us, till he can shew his Title to it, by which we must be inform'd of his Right. For why should I receive any Man, that pretends a Claim to my Allegiance, sooner than the *Sultan*, or the *Czar* of *Muscovy*, if either of them should? 'Twill be replied, I suppose, that the Law of our Land ordains, that the Heir should succeed. True, it does so; but it does not say who is Heir. That is a Matter of Fact (and not of Law) which is to be decided by rational Evidence and sufficient Testimony. Therefore, to make our Princes Titles certain, some of our greatest Lawyers have insisted, that our Bishops and great Noblemen ought to be present at their Birth. Whether this is strictly Law, or not; or whether only consequentially so, our Common Law (which allows none to seize an Estate that can't make out his Title to it) looking on the Bishops as the gravest and most uncorrupted Persons in the Kingdom, I shall not dispute. Nor am I at all concern'd to do it, since the Law of Reason is sufficient to prove that there must be the clearest

clearest Evidence given, let the manner of giving it be what it will.

'Twas also contrary to the Politicks and Practice of other Governments in parallel Cases. The Monarchies of *France* and *Spain* are as absolute, and the Administration as haughty as any in *Europe*; yet the Queens of both those mighty Kingdoms submitted themselves to be deliver'd nakedly before those whose Interest it was to see, that there should be no Cheat. And I believe there can be no Instance given of any Government that ever refused to satisfy a Nation that was known to have such Suspicions. There was a Prince of *Spain* set aside on much less Grounds, even because the *Spanish* Nation thought their King could not get his Queen with Child: And the Princess *Isabella* had the Government devolved upon her by the States.

To all this I suppose you'll reply, that tho' there was not such Evidence for the Birth, as was proper for the King to give, and for us to expect; yet that his being own'd by his Father and Mother, is sufficient to silence our Complaints, and make us acquiesce in their Declarations. And this is the chief Thing that is insisted on by the

Chevalier's Friends. Here they think they are supported by the allow'd Practice of the World, and defended by indisputable Maxims out of the Civil Law; as *Filius est, quem Pater & Mater agnoscunt*; *Filiatio non debet probari*; and more of the same Nature; all implying, that a Child's being acknowledged by its Parents, ought to satisfy all other People. To which Objection I answer,

First, That Maxims being general Rules founded on general Observations of human Nature, have no farther Force and Extent, than those Reasons and Probabilities, on which they were first built, do demand; and therefore that they must always admit of some Exceptions and Limitations. And the Way to discover where those Maxims do hold, and where they do not, is by comparing those particular Instances with those Reasons and Grounds on which the Maxims are built. As for Instance, in this Case, the Reason why we generally look upon the Acknowledgment of the Parents to be a sufficient Argument for the Child's Legitimacy, is because that generally speaking 'tis not to be suppos'd, that People would either injure their Relations and their Family by introducing a Cheat,

Cheat, or give themselves so much Trouble, as to bring up an Infant that was none of their own. So you see that the Ground of this receiv'd Opinion is, that we can't suppose there can usually happen a Cause adequate to such an Effect. But when there is a sufficient Temptation for committing such a Cheat, then the Maxim, with its Reason on which it rests, falls to the Ground. Suppose a Party whose *All* depends on such a Birth, and whose *Interest* therefore 'tis that there should be one; and of *such a Religion* as will tempt them to prosecute *that Interest*: Suppose again, that the Nation is uneasy under this Prospect, and they know their Uneasiness, and yet refuse to give them suitable Satisfaction; and I'll leave it to you to judge, what Relief that Party can claim from their Civil-Law Maxims. But farther.

Secondly, These Maxims are misunderstood and misapply'd. They relate only to the Father, and not the Mother; that is, a Child's being own'd by his Parents to be the Son of such a Man, will be allow'd for an Argument that the Man was his Father, but not that the Woman was his Mother. *Cæterum esse aliquem* (says *Puffendorf*, *Lib. 4.*

cap. 11. §. 10.) *alterius Patrem, neque semper rationibus indubiis demonstrari, neque testimoniis aliorum ita liquido ostendi potest, sicut de Matre constat.* And Grotius gives the Reason of this Difference; namely, that where the Nature of the Thing won't admit of better Proofs, there we ought to be contented with such as we can get. 'Tis true (as he says, *Lib. 2. cap. 7. §. 16.*) *Naturales, & qui minus certi habentur, ad contemptum patent;* and therefore he infers, *At in Regnis expedit populo haberi maximam certitudinem quæ haberi potest ad vitandas controversias.* And what that greatest Certainty which can be had, both with respect to Father and Mother, is, he tells us in *Lib. 2. cap. 7. §. 8.* *Verum est de factis* (says he, speaking with respect to the Father, because the Action which creates his Relation to the Son, *non solet in conspectu hominum fieri*) *nullam esse certam perceptionem: Sed ea quæ solent in hominum conspectu fieri sui generis certitudinem habent ex testimonio: Quo sensu Mater certa esse dicitur, quia inveniuntur, qui quæve Partui & Educationi adfuerint. At de Patre hujus gradus certitudo haberi non potest.* He then refers us to the Case of *Virginus*, who was oblig'd to prove that his Daugh-

Daughter was born of his Wife, in a Court of Judicature at *Rome*. And 'tis remarkable that he did prove it by two Arguments, which the *Chevalier* had the Misfortune to have no Pretence to. For first, *Virginus* pleads, that he could have no Interest to move him to be guilty of such an Action; that his Wife and he were both young, and therefore might expect some of their own; that if he would have been guilty of such a Cheat, he would have chosen rather a Boy, than a Girl. But then, Secondly, he appeals to the Testimony of a great many Women, and Women of good Reputation, and insists that they saw *τιτουμενον το παιδιον* *infantem nascentem*, the Child in the very Act of being brought forth. *Dionys. Halicar.* p. 681. Ed. *Oxon.*

But perhaps you'll say, whatever Reason we had to complain before; yet certainly after the *Depositions* were publish'd, the Nation ought to have been entirely satisfy'd. But pray consider, what Disadvantages these *Depositions* labour'd under. You know, they were not publish'd till the latter End of *October*, a little before the Prince of *Orange's* Landing, when King *James* seem'd forc'd to put what Gloss he could upon all his

his illegal Actions. Besides, it being almost five Months since the Birth, People might suspect that some or other of the Deponents did not exactly remember some Particulars on which great Stress ought to be laid. Farther, They were all either profess'd Papists, or Dependants on the Court; and consequently in the Eye of our Law (which is so impartial, that formerly *Scotch* and *English* were not allow'd to be Witnesses against each other) they were not *Homines Legales*. Again, most of the Depositions seem to prove nothing at all, but look rather as if they were brought to amuse us: And those two or three of 'em which do seem to contain Proofs, came either from some Protestants, whose Characters, I find, were by no means unsuspected, or from such notorious Papists and Creatures of the Court, as could by no means be allow'd for sufficient Evidence in so weighty a Cause. And lastly, even this Satisfaction was not given, till the Nation was in such Confusion, that 'twas impossible for People in a short Time to lay aside their former Suspicions; so nice and unusual a Case requiring a long Space to compare our Opinions, examine all the Circumstances, and get a Knowledge of the Depo-

Deponents Characters, as well as divest ourselves of those Opinions which had, by being for so long a Time undisturb'd, taken deep Root in us.

This King *James's* Friends, when 'twas too late, were sensible of: And after the Revolution, when King *William* and Queen *Mary* were settled on the Throne, they endeavour'd to repair it, by re-examining the Deponents, and offering their fuller and more explicit Declarations to the Parliament; as appears by a Paper prepared for that Purpose, and dated *October* 1690, in which, after they complain of the Want of Credit the former Depositions met with, they desire that the Case might be reheard, promising that their next Testimonies should be, if possible, more plain, particular, and comprehensive than the former; and that they have several Things to offer, which before were judg'd unnecessary, and omitted out of Modesty and Reserve. They farther observe, that the Circumstances of Time were now such, that it could not with the least Pretence of Reason be supposed, that the Deponents were either bribed, or overaw'd into a partial Testimony in favour of the Prince of *Wales*, as was before objected; and

and that the present Posture of Affairs would afford all imaginable Encouragement for Freedom of Questions, confronting the Deponents, and producing counter Evidences, if any such there be. See Mr. *Lesly's* Answer to the Archbishop of *Dublin*, p. 49. of the Appendix.

Hitherto then, you find, the Nation remain'd unsatisfy'd about the Birth; and the chief Ground of it was, because the Court neglected to give such Evidence as they had reason to expect. Whether any Persons, whose Interest it was, did propagate malicious Stories to deceive the People; we are not concern'd to enquire. If they did, let them answer it to God. But the Blame must still lie on the Court too, who might (if they had acted as they ought to have done) put it out of any bodies Power to have raised scandalous Stories upon that Subject.

You may possibly urge, that tho' what I have hitherto alledged may prove indeed, that the Court did not give sufficient Evidence of the Birth: Yet 'tis not enough for us to plead, that his Birth was not *prov'd*; but we must admit it for a Truth until it be *disprov'd*. We allow other Peoples Birth with-

without Proof; and why then should we not admit *his*? To which I answer, that the Nation was not oblig'd to prove a Negative. Nothing (at least of Fact) needs to be *disprov'd*, till 'tis otherwise supposed to be *prov'd*. 'Twould never be thought reasonable for a Man to lay claim to an Estate (especially when other Persons had Pretensions to it) unless he could bring substantial positive Evidence of his Right to it. And this Reasoning holds with respect to the Births of other Persons. The Legitimacy of others is sufficiently proved, in all ordinary Cases, at least, by their being own'd by their Parents. Those who attested the *Chevalier's* Birth (as appears by the Reasons above-mention'd) were too much concern'd as *Parties*, to be admitted as *Witnesses*; and therefore could not on this Occasion be proper Evidence. So that the very same thing which is ordinarily a Proof of the Legitimacy of other Persons, was not so with respect to the *Chevalier*. Wherefore,

My *Second* Proposition is, That *on that occasion, the States of the Realm had Power to determine the Controversy about the Succession*. All Controversies are to be decided,

either by the Sword, or by some civil Authority. When we must have recourse to the former Trial, and when to the latter, must be known *ex statu vi utentium*, from the Condition of the Parties concern'd, say *Grotius* and *Puffendorff*. Those that are in a State of Nature, as all independent Kingdoms are, with respect to each other, decide their Controversies by the Sword, as a Method agreeable to that State in which every one is Judge for himself, and oblig'd to be determin'd by nothing besides his own Judgment. But all Controversies that happen in, and relate to, a Society, can never be referr'd to the Determination of the Sword; because such a Practice is absolutely inconsistent with the very Idea of a Society, as it stands contradistinguish'd to a State of Nature. It remains therefore, that all Controversies that happen in, and relate to, a Society, must be adjusted by some Authority in that Society. The Question therefore will be, by what Authority those Controversies shall be ended; whether by the King, as the Governor, or by the States of the Nation, as they are *in statu naturali* with respect to the King in this Case, tho' with

with respect to each other they are in a State of Society.

You'll give me leave so far to interrupt the Course of the Argument, as to observe, that you may, if you please, still suppose the King to be in the Nation, since 'tis not material to this way of Reasoning, to enquire whether the King did desert us or not; that is, whether he was *forc'd* to leave off governing us in *his own Person*, and also *forc'd* not to leave a Regency behind him.

Now the Question before-mention'd, *viz.* Who shall determine the Controversy concerning the Succession, whether the King or the States, must be resolv'd by considering the *Nature* of the Controversy itself. Now Political Writers are agreed, that it does not belong to the present Governor to determine a Controversy concerning the Successions. *Est autem causa successionis* (says Grotius, L. 2. c. 7. §. 27.) *non subiecta Regi nunc regnanti: — Successio enim Imperii non est sub jure Imperii, ac proinde mansit in statu naturali; in quo nulla erat jurisdictio. Ipse Rex* (says Puffendorf, L. 7. c. 7. §. 15.) *si eo vivo controversia hæc agitari cæperit, non erit competens judex: quippe cum in ejusmodi Regnis præsupponatur,*
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Populum habendi Imperii modum Regi haudquaquam submississe. And afterwards, *Causa successionis non pertinet ad objectum ejus jurisdictionis, quæ à Populo in Regem fuit collata.* All which implies, that the King, *quæ* King, or from the Nature of his Power, can't claim a Right of disposing of the Succession; because the Nature of his Power only infers a Right of exercising that Power himself, that is, of governing us himself, and not of disposing of us afterwards to other Persons. As an elective King can leave his Kingdom to no body at all; so an hereditary King (unless particularly empower'd by Law) can leave his Kingdom to no body, but whom the Law assigns it to; and if the Law is silent, to no body at all.

Now as no King from his Right of Kingship can pretend to any such Power; so neither at present can ours, from our particular Constitution, which ('tis notorious) allows the King alone to make no Law relating to his own Government, much less one which is beyond it. I know it has been pretended, that our Kings did formerly assume to themselves a *Testamentary* Power of appointing a Successor: But be that as it will, 'tis nothing to us now. However, I can't forbear

bear observing with *Grotius*, L. 1. c. 3. §. 13. that such Wills of Kings had rather *Com-mendationis vim, quam veræ Alienationis. Atque de Carolo Ado memorat, voluisse eum testamentum suum a Francorum optimatibus confirmari.* And sure, if it had no greater Power in *France*, we can't expect it should in *England*. Of the same Opinion is *Puffendorf*, in the Place above-cited.

If therefore the King can pretend to no such Power (neither from the Nature of Government in general, nor from our Constitution in particular) and yet there must be some such Power in every Society; it follows, that it must be in the States of every Nation. *Extra illum Populum de cujus imperio ambigitur, nemo judicem se ferre potest*, says *Puffendorf*. I don't pretend, that the States have a Power to go contrary to the *known* Laws of Succession, and to set aside the right Heir who has a *clear* Title. No; in that Case their Hands are already ty'd up. But the Question is, what Power they have when there happens a Case which the Laws don't reach, or are not clear about; which is then the same thing, as if we had no Laws at all relating to it: For *non Entibus, & non Apparentibus, eadem est ratio.*

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But to be a little more particular upon so important a Point. I observe, that such a Power is acknowledg'd to reside in the States upon the Extinction of the Royal Family, and for the same Reason it must be in them too in the Case of a dubious Title.

That upon the Extinction of the Royal Family, the Power of nominating a Successor, or settling the Succession in a new Line, belongs to the People, is so plain a Truth, that it is not worth proving. Nay, the States have a Right to make that Settlement even in the Life-time of the last King of the Line: Nor is such an Action inconsistent with the Character of Subjects; it being not an *Act* of Government, or proceeding from it (and consequently it does not interfere with the Power of the present King) but the *Cause* of Government, and which is not to take Effect till the present King's Authority is at an end.

Now the Reason of all this is, that in a Free Nation, no Person or Family can *originally* pretend to any Right of Government, otherwise than from the Consent of the People; and consequently their Right of Government can never extend any farther than

than the Peoples Consent. From whence also it appears, that in the Case of a dubious Title, the States must have the same Power as in that of the Extinction of the Royal Family. Because a doubtful Title, with relation to those, with respect to whom 'tis doubtful, is really (during its Doubtfulness) *no Title*. For a Person's having a Title to any thing, implies his ceasing to be *equal* and upon the same Foot with other People (as he was before) and his being invested with a peculiar and superior Power (as to that thing) above any other Person. While therefore there is any other Person that is upon that Account equal to him, he must, with respect to that Person, be look'd upon to have *no Title*. And consequently the Power of giving a Title returns to the States, as upon the Extinction of the Royal Line; with this only Difference, that whereas in the latter Case they might chuse from among the whole Nation, in this Case they are confin'd to the contending Parties. Because tho' they have no Title with relation to each other; yet they have, as to any body else. And therefore tho' the Nation (to use *Puffendorf's* Instance) while these Parties remain, can't make a new Will; yet,

says he, they may *obscura & ambigua verba interpretari*, or explain the old one. In short, Succession being nothing but the Continuation of Government; they who first made it, or to whom it belongs to make it a-new, if 'twere extinguish'd, must have a Right too, when 'tis at a stand by intervening Difficulties, to continue it by removing those Difficulties.

If you should object, that the States have no Power to oblige the particular Persons of the Community at a Time, when you may possibly imagine they were entirely in a State of Nature; I think you may receive a very satisfactory Answer out of *Puffendorf's* admirable second Chapter of his seventh Book *De internâ Civitatum Structurâ*; in which he sufficiently exposes, on one side Mr. *Hobbs*, and on the other the *Original Contract Men*. In that Chapter he shews you, that every Community, tho' before the Formation, and at the Cessation or Stoppage of any Government, it cannot be said to be in a State of Government; yet is still in a State of Society: And its being in a State of Society gives it a sufficient Power by a Majority to oblige every single Member. Every Government implies a
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Society; tho' every Society does not immediately, and in the *Idea* of it, imply a Government. A Government is form'd, as he goes on, by two *Compacts* (don't be afraid of the Word, for his *Compacts* are not such as the Republicans suppose) the first, by which every particular Person must be supposed to have laid himself under an Obligation to be of that Community, and consequently (from the Nature of the Thing) to be determin'd by it; the second, by which this Community, thus form'd, proceeds to make a Government. Hence you perceive, that a Society is to each particular Person in a State of no form'd Government, or in a Cause that does not fall within the Determination of that Government; I say, a Society is in such Case to each particular Person the very same which a Government is to a Society in a State of Government, and is consequently capable of creating the same Obligations.

Agreeable to these Principles, which I take to be the Law of Nature about Government, has been the Law of Nations, or the Practice of Mankind, as explanatory of the Law of Nature. Thus the Controversy about the Succession to the Crown of *France*,

between our *Edward III.* and *Philip of Valois*, was submitted to, and determined by, the States of *France*. And surely the States of *England* had the same Authority to interpose between the Prince of *Wales* and the Prince of *Orange*. There are many other Instances of the like Nature, which are too long here to insert, and may be seen at large in *Puffendorf*, L. 7. c. 7. §. 15. and *Grotius*, L. 2. c. 7. §. 27*.

But you'll say, granting the *English* States had upon this Occasion a Power to determine the Controversy, yet they first ought to have examin'd it after the best Manner, and not to have been over-aw'd by a rising Greatness, or too much sway'd by Reasons drawn from the *public Good*. I desire you therefore to consider,

First, That since it appears from the Nature of the Cause, that they were upon this Occasion the proper Judges, and consequently capable of determining it in an *authoritative* Manner, they alone are concern'd

* I must observe here, that since the first Edition of this Book, the *Parliament of Paris* has determin'd the Case of the *Legitimated Princes* upon the Principles laid down in this Proposition. *Vide* Postman, July 3, 1717.

cern'd to justify the Disinterestedness of their Proceedings before God and their own Consciences. If they did not proceed in the most exact manner that we could wish, and perhaps that we ourselves do now think we should have chosen if we had been in their Places, we can't help it. 'Twas their Duty indeed to act upon the best and clearest Reasons they could possibly be acquainted with before they gave their Judgments; but when once it is given, it becomes our Duty to submit to it. This way of Reasoning is universally allow'd as to any other authoritative Determination; and consequently (since I have prov'd that in this Case theirs was authoritative) it ought to be allow'd in this.

Secondly, That I don't well understand what Reason you have to insinuate that the Convention were influenc'd by their Fears, &c. I have a greater Esteem for the Representatives of my Country, than to imagine that the States of *England* were capable of being aw'd by a Prince at the Head of 10000 Men. Nay, 'tis remarkable that the Duke of *Ormond*, after he had appear'd in the House for King *James's* Interest, was one of the first Persons that was brought

over to the opposite Side. And even the *Englishman* will allow him to be a Man who had too great a Soul to be capable of Fear, and of so generous a Spirit, as would incline him rather to side with a sinking Cause, than fall in with a growing Power. And whatever you may think of the Commons, the Lords behaved with that Courage, and spoke so plainly upon all the other Articles (which were as tender Points as the Birth of the Prince of *Wales*) that I can't imagine they refused out of Fear to own their Opinion of the Prince of *Wales's* Birth, when they were so often call'd upon and challeng'd by the Commons to speak out, and if they were clear themselves in it, to signify their Opinion to the Commons and the World. They had no reason at that time to believe any farther Evidence could be given for the Birth than already appear'd in the *Depositions*, which was then judg'd by no means satisfactory. But since that was the legal Evidence that King *James* thought fit to trust to, and in which 'twas to be presum'd all his Strength lay ; they thought they had nothing to do but to declare their Opinion of those Proofs, and make known their Satisfaction (if they had

had any) from them. But they all agreed, that from the Evidence then appearing the Matter was by no means clear. So they (to use the Words of King William's *Answer* to King James's *Memorials* offer'd at *Reswick*, p. 10.) *did not think it was necessary, or incumbent upon them, to examine that which the whole Nation in general, as well as the Prince of Orange in particular, had just reason to call in question concerning the Birth of the pretended Prince of Wales.*

— They thought fit to let it remain in that just Doubtfulness, under which King James's own Method of Proceedings had brought it: besides, that a particular Care had been taken by King James, to cause all those who had been in the Management of that Matter, or were suspected of having a Share in the *Artifices* about it, to be carried over into France: So that it was not possible to come at those Persons, by the interrogating of whom Truth might have been found out.

Thirdly, That it does not by any means appear that they were carried away by Reasons only drawn from the *Public Good*. 'Twas not the *Necessity of the Case* which gave 'em that Power at that time, but the *Nature and Reason of the Cause*, which (as

appears above) properly belong'd to them as Judges. I own to you, I can't think any *accidental Necessity* could warrant their acting contrary to the *natural Necessity of being in a State of Government*; which is the Reason why I could never come into the Opinion of deposing Kings for the *Public Good*. But then you must agree with me, that the *Public Good* ought to have its just Weight and Force with them, when once (from other Reasons) they became invested with an authoritative Capacity. In all doubtful Cases therefore, where there is a manifest and great Hazard of injuring either on the one side a particular Person or Family, or on the other a whole Commonwealth, there ought certainly to be so much more Care taken of the latter, by how much a Community is of greater Concern than any single Person whatsoever. And how deeply, or rather mortally, the Nation must have been wounded if it had not then been reliev'd, no Body can be ignorant that considers either the foreign Interests or our domestick Circumstances. No Wonder therefore, if when they once became Judges, they paid a very particular Respect to the Interests of the Nation.

At present let us only consider the Uncertainty of the *Chevalier's* Birth, and the Convention sitting upon this Point, as the Explainers of the Will of the first Institutors of our Succession, and I believe you'll find they acted agreeably to the Rules laid down by *Grotius* and *Puffendorf*, to be observ'd on such an Occasion. In all extraordinary undefin'd Cases (says *Grotius*) *præsumitur Populus aut Rex id voluisse, quod maxime expedit.* And *creditur in dubio id quisque voluisse, quod æquissimum & honestissimum est.* But this Reason of Expediency, as explicative of the Will of the first Founder, is no where more plain, than with respect to a doubtful Birth. *For of all things 'tis highly expedient* (says *Puffendorf*, L. 7. c. 7. §. 12.) *that the Person of a King should be awful and venerable, and as little as possible expos'd to Controversy and Doubt; which can never happen while his Birth is uncertain, especially in a Nation of Spirit and Honour. Which is the Reason* (says he) *why in some Kingdoms Queens* (when there were any preceding Jealousies) *have been publickly deliver'd, to avoid the Suspicions of a false or supposititious Birth.* And then he instances in *Queen Constance*, the Mother of *Frederick II.*

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Naturales, & qui minus certi habentur, ad contemptum patent, &c. Ne succedant igitur (says Grotius) *nisi qui nati sunt* (and I may add, for the Reason is the same, *de quibus clarum est fuisse natos*) *secundum Patriæ Leges.* Hence, tho' a Prince, whose Birth is disputed, should be genuine; yet since that does not clearly appear to the Nation, the first Founder must be supposed to have superseded his Right for the Good of the rest of the Family, and of the whole Nation. *For altho' it is very likely* (says Puffendorf, L. 7. c. 7. §. 11.) *that the Father bears an equal Affection to all his Children, yet if he be wise he will so far moderate and restrain it, as not to weaken the hereditary Estate, on which the Security and Honour of the Family in a great measure depend. And he shall be presum'd to have taken this Resolution, if he hath not expressly declar'd any thing to the contrary.*

I come now to consider the *third* and last Proposition, viz. *That the Determination then made still remains in force, tho' the States were at that time mistaken in their Opinion of the Chevalier's Birth.* This last Proposition flows as necessarily from the two former as a Consequence from its Premises.

For

For if the *Chevalier's* Birth was doubted of at that Time by the *English* Nation, and the Nature of the Cause was such as empower'd the States of the Realm to determine it, it is plain that their Determination must produce the same Effects as all other Judgments do that are given by the proper Judges. Now we know, that in all Nations, by the supreme Law of all Societies, which refers the Decision of Rights to a proper Authority, he who by a Sentence given in favour of him is possessed of the Thing he contends for, has thenceforward (tho' perhaps the Sentence given was not agreeable to Equity) a Right in that Thing; and all who submit to Laws and legal Authority, must and do acquiesce in it. And the Reason is plain from the Nature of a judicial Sentence, which does not derive its Force and Obligation from the intrinsic Justice of the Determination, but from the Authority of the Determiners. To submit therefore to such a Sentence no farther than as it is agreeable to Reason, is to deny it to be a *Sentence* properly so call'd, and consequently is to oppose the *second* Proposition, and not the *third*, which I am now proving. 'Tis in a State of Nature only that I have no other

other Obligations than what result from the Reasons of Things. To suppose therefore that the Society has no other Obligations than such as arise from the Reasons of Things, is to suppose the Society to be in a State of Nature, which is a Contradiction.

But farther. As all Disputes about the Rights of Men belonging to a Society must be ended in a manner that will admit of no farther Debate among private Persons, so more especially do the Controversies about succeeding to the Throne require a *final* Determination, as they are of the highest Importance, and such as generally (when they come to be decided by the Sword) occasion the greatest Bloodshed and Ruin in a Nation. This Consideration therefore affords us a most pressing Argument for our Submission to the Judgment of the States in relation to the *Succession*.

For every Society must be allow'd to have a Power of preventing its being *necessarily* and *innocently* plunged into a Civil War. Now those that make a Determination according to their *then* Judgments, act *innocently*, and therefore ought not *necessarily* to be plunged into a Civil War. But those that can't make such a Determination as obliges
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all Subjects to acquiesce in it, and consequently is irreversibile by private Persons (for I affirm nothing concerning the Power of a proper Authority, nor do I enquire what it can do) must necessarily be plunged into a Civil War. Because it is *morally impossible* that any present Possessor should ever *peaceably* resign the Enjoyment of Empire. Now a *moral Impossibility* in *political* Affairs is equal to a *natural* one in *natural* Matters. Wherefore a Power of making such a Determination, as is irreversibile with respect to Persons in private Capacities, must be understood to be primarily reserved in all Societies.

If Non-Resistance to the supreme Power (that is, to the *King* in our Nation) be a true Doctrine (as I verily believe it is when rightly explain'd, which has seldomer happened in this than in almost any Controversy *) I can't see but that this Argument must be conclusive; for I take them both to
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* I think, the best Direction we can take, either in stating the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience*, or resolving the Questions arising from it, may be borrow'd from our *Saviour's* Determination of the famous Case of *Divorce*.

turn upon the same Thing. For the Law of Nature obliges us to be in a State of Government, and consequently it forbids any Action that *necessarily* destroys Government. Now Resistance *necessarily* destroys Government, and therefore it is unlawful *Jure Naturæ*. You see the great Medium that both the Doctrine of *Non-Resistance*, and that of Submission to the Determination of the States are proved by, is, that the contrary does *necessarily* reduce us into a State of War, which is always a State of Nature, tho' a State of Nature is not always a State of War.

To conclude this Argument. Whatever Right to the Crown the *Chevalier* may possibly have lost, whatever Hardships and Misfortunes he has been forc'd to undergo, it is all *originally* owing to the unaccountable Management of that infatuated Court wherein he was born. For had the just Suspicions of the Nation been either prevented by such Methods as ought to have been taken, or remov'd by such satisfactory Evidence as the Law of Nature gave them a Right to demand, the States could *then* have had no Pretence to have interpos'd in an Affair that would not have needed to be

determined. And consequently (had they officiously assumed an Authority to which they had not a just Pretence) they could have had no Right to oblige us by their Determination. But by that first and inexcusable false Step, of denying to give the Nation sufficient Evidence of the Birth, after they had given them too much Reason to suspect it, every thing became the Reverse of what the *Chevalier's* Interest required. The Nation remain'd dissatisfied. And this must necessarily have produc'd a War, if the Cause had not been determin'd by proper Judges. The Nature of the Cause, which was *extra Regimen*, or such as did not fall under the Cognizance and Determination of the *King* or his *Courts* (for it did not relate to *his* governing Us, and therefore it could not be in any wise defin'd *pro Imperio*, as *Puffendorf* phrases it; besides, that in Equity no Person can be Judge in his own Cause) made the States of the Realm the only proper Judges of it. And if they were the proper Judges, I am sure private Persons are bound in Conscience to acquiesce in their Judgments. For else it is all one as if there had been no Judgment passed. For if private Men may still adhere to their own private Opinions, and determine the Cause

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(each Man for himself) as its proper and sole Judges, the Dispute must necessarily end in Blows, which is contrary to the Reason and Nature of human Societies, that were instituted to prevent Wars, and to end all Controversies by authoritative Decisions. There are no Rights belonging to any Person as a Member of a Society, of which the Society either has not, or cannot constitute proper Judges, whose Sentence must determine every private Man; nor ought any Right, or Pretence of Right after such a Sentence, to affect our Consciences, unless Civil Rights can oblige us to dissolve Civil Governments, and to dispute Civil Rights not by the Law of Government, but by the Sword, which is to overthrow all Civil Rights, and put an End to the very Being of Society.

I have hitherto been asserting King GEORGE's Title, by endeavouring to shew the *Lawfulness* of that Power which was the first *Foundation* of it. I will now consider, what Force it can derive to itself from its *present Nature* and *Circumstances*. Now that the *present Nature* and *Circumstances* of King GEORGE's Title, give him a just Right and Claim to our Allegiance will appear, if I can prove these two Propositions.

First,

First, That if none of the several Schemes, by which King GEORGE's Title is defended, appears in your Opinion *strictly true*; yet you must be forc'd to allow, there are in some of them such considerable Probabilities, as may incline honest and reasonable Men to embrace them.

Secondly, That such *Probabilities* of Right, join'd with *actual Possession*, make the *Possessor* become *rightful* and *lawful King*.

For the Proof of the first Proposition, 'twill be necessary briefly to examine some of the several Schemes insisted on by those that submit to the present Government. Among which that of King James the Second's *Desertion*, as being (at least formerly) the most generally receiv'd, deserves in the first Place to be taken Notice of.

However of late Years *this* Opinion may have been exploded by different Persons upon different Views, 'tis plain (as my late Lord *Haverſham* observ'd in his excellent *Speech* at Dr. *Sacheverel's* Trial) it was the Opinion that the Majority of the Clergy founded their coming in to the Government on, and which the Publick Authority of the Nation gave most Countenance to. For before the Convention met, 'tis said, that by the Advice of

some eminent Lawyers, who thought that the *King's Absence was an Abdication*, the Prince of *Orange* sent his Secretary to the Judges to forbid the Term. And tho' the Commons in the Convention preferred the Word *Abdication*, 'twas only because that Term was thought to comprehend both the Ideas of *Desertion* and *Mismanagement*; following therein the Advice that the Duke of *York* gave in the Case of *Richard II.* who thought it best that King *Richard* should both voluntarily resign his Crown, and be solemnly deposed by the Parliament too; because, said he, tho' the Judgment of Parliament may make him thought *worthy* to be *depos'd*; yet his *Deprivation* will never be just, unless he join'd in a *Resignation*.

Whatever Difficulty the Lords at the free Conference made about agreeing with the Commons as to the Abdication, there was not one of them (unless we may except my Lord *Clarendon*) that made any Scruple of coming into the *Desertion*. And tho' at last the Lords consented to unite their Sentiments with the Sentiments of the Commons, in a *Word* that express'd both; 'tis remarkable, that afterwards, when the Case of the Lord *Preston* came before their *Lordships*, and the
Judges,

Judges, their Assistants, they judicially determin'd against his Lordship, that the Vacancy was suppos'd to begin from the Moment King James left the Kingdom, whereby he abdicated the Government.

And if King William may be admitted as a good Judge, 'tis apparent from the famous *Memorials* design'd to be given in at *Reswick*, that he chose chiefly to insist on King James's *Desertion*, when he was to plead his Cause before all the Princes in *Europe*. During this *Negotiation* (says he) and after the late King had Notice given him what the King's Demands were, He, upon Reasons best known to himself, threw up all, and abandon'd the Government; and let his Army loose on the Nation, and the Rabble upon the City of London, and withdrew himself: — Which the Enemies of this Kingdom persuaded the late King to venture on, rather than to stay and suffer a Parliament to enquire into the Causes of the Miseries the Nation was fallen under, and to secure their Religion and Property. Upon this, that Part of the Nation which till then adher'd to the late King, finding themselves abandon'd by him, desired that the King would assume the Administration of this forsaken Government, till the

States should be brought together — who came to a full Resolution, That the late King having abandon'd the Government, it was necessary for them, being thus forsaken by him, to see to their own Security, p. 8, 9. And in p. 17. But the late King chose to desert his Government, and to have recourse to a Foreign Force, and to the ancient Enemy of this Kingdom, rather than to sit and suffer a Parliament to settle the Nation, which was then quite shaken by his ill Administration. By his so doing, he set his Subjects free from any further Tye to himself, and made it necessary for them to see to their own Safety: Which they did, by continuing the ancient Government, with no other Interruption than what their present Circumstances made unavoidable.

This Hypothesis being supported by such great Authorities, 'twill be worth our while (after having stated the Notion and Consequences of Desertion) to examine, 1st, whether King James did desert the Government; and if he did, 2^{dly}, what Effect his Desertion might have on the Chevalier.

By Desertion, I mean a leaving the Nation without a Government, when there was not an absolute Necessity of leaving it in that

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Condition. Now that *Desertion* does necessarily, and from the very Nature of it, divest a King of all Right and Title to his Kingdoms, must be allowed by all those, who acknowledge a *Resignation* to be capable of producing that Effect. For a *Desertion* is nothing else but a *Resignation* declar'd by *Fact*, as a *Resignation* is a *Desertion* declar'd by *Word*. A King may notify his Intention to give up the Government as significantly by Actions as he can by Words. The only Difference is, that tho' they are both equally declaratory of his Designs; his Words declare it more expressly and immediately: whereas his Actions do it only consequentially, or by necessary Inferences. As Government is originally form'd by the Peoples consenting to be governed by such a Person, and that Person's consenting to govern them; so it is dissolv'd either by Rebellion on the one side, which is the Peoples refusing to be govern'd by the King; or on the other side by Resignation or Desertion, or any other way, that implies the King's being willing no longer to govern the People. In short, the Care of the Nation being the true primary End, and first Design of Government, and the very Essence

of Government itself; whenever a King does of himself relinquish the Care of the Nation, he does by a necessary Consequence relinquish the Government also, and so makes void his own Right and Title.

A Man of your good Sense won't be afraid of this Reasoning, as if it inclin'd too much to Republican Principles, which no one is more averse to than I am. The *Republicans* suppose, that a King has lost his Title to their Allegiance, when he does not govern them *well*; whereas I suppose, that he loses his Title only when he does not govern them *at all*; or when the great Ends of Government are defeated: They suppose that his not taking *good* Care of the Nation; whereas I suppose only, that his taking *no* Care of it, or what is tantamount to *no* Care of it, cancels our Duty of Obedience. And this taking *no* Care or *Desertion*, has been judg'd a cancelling the Subjects Duty of Obedience, by the greatest Assertors of Monarchy, and the Sacredness of Princes. At present I shall only name *Grotius* and *Puffendorf*, whom whoever looks on as Republicans, I'll be bold to say, that he never read 'em so as to understand 'em. *Si Rex* (says *Grotius*) *Imperium abdicavit, aut manifestè*

nifestè habet pro derelicto, in eum post id tempus omnia licent, quæ in privatum. And *Puffendorf* in that very Section, in which he admirably proves, that there is no such *Original Contract* implied in the Nature of Government, as infers a Power in the People to animadvert upon their Rulers for the Breach of it, concludes with observing, that there are but three Ways by which a King can cease to be King; *viz.* If he should either be guilty of a Violation of such Rules, as were the *very Condition* of his being King, as is sometimes the Case in *Poland*, and would now be with us, if our King should turn *Papist*; or if he should become a profest Enemy to the Commonwealth, or *abandon the whole Care of the Kingdom.* L. 7. c. 2. § 10.

I think I have made it evident to you, that *Desertion* will destroy a King's Title. Let us now see, whether Desertion can be justly laid to King *James's* Charge.

That he did abandon the Nation, and leave us without a Government, is evident. For he not only withdrew his own Person, when there was the greatest Occasion for his Presence: but left no Regency, nor even a Deputation behind him. The only

Question therefore will be, whether there was an absolute Necessity for his leaving us in that Condition; and consequently whether his Management must be imputed to his Subjects, and deem'd *involuntary* in himself; or whether he acted without a justifiable Reason, so that his Action must be reckon'd *voluntary*. I don't mean, nor imagine, that he had a Mind to give up his Title to the Government. I would only be understood to say, that he chose to do an Action without being forc'd to it, the doing of which did necessarily, and in its own Nature, destroy his Relation to the Government.

Now nothing could excuse him for leaving us, unless there was sufficient Reason to believe, that by staying he would have lost his Life or Liberty, neither of which seems to have been in any great Danger, if we consider the Temper of the Nation, and the Characters of the Persons chiefly concerned in the Revolution.

The Nation in general was never more Loyally inclined to any Prince that ever sat upon the *English* Throne, than it was to King *James*. The Church of *England* (which is the main Body of the Nation) appear'd for him in the most difficult and trying

ing Times. And after he came to be King, the other Parties that had opposed his coming to the Throne, endeavour'd to make Reparation for their former Affronts, by a too great and scandalously mean Compliance. In short, the dreadful Apprehensions the Nation lay under of a civil War, the execrable and shocking Cruelties that had been lately exercis'd on the *Royal Martyr*, the strong Affection of the Body of the People to the Family of the *Stuarts*, and that firm Rooting which the Principles of Submission to our Monarchs had taken among us, had so thoroughly possess'd the Kingdom in Favour of King *James*; that 'twas impossible for him to have lost his Crown, if he had not at least given his Subjects occasion to take hold of the Pretence (be it a true or a false one) of his abandoning the Kingdom.

This sufficiently appears from the Management of the House of Lords at the Convention, where the first Motion that was made, *viz. Not to agree with the Commons that the Throne was vacant*, was carried in Favour of the King. And all the conjoin'd Force and Oratory, that the late Duke of *Leeds* and the Marquis of *Hallifax* were Masters of (and no Men could be Masters
of

of more) were scarce able to withstand the hereditary Eloquence of the Earl of *Nottingham*, which was entirely employ'd in King *James's* Service. And his *Speech* for a *Regent* is said (by an Historian, that had no Inclination to compliment him) to have had so great an Influence on the House, that he lost the Question but by *two* Votes, for which King *James* may thank Archbishop *Sancreft's* not appearing in the House. Nay, so tender were the Lords of King *James's* Interest, that they would not resolve without some formal Debate, *Whether on Supposition that there was an Original Contract, King James had broken it.* In short, the manifest Difficulty that appear'd in inducing the Lords to determine against King *James*, even when they had got the Pretence of the *Desertion* to make use of; is a most notorious Argument, that, had they been without that Plea, they would most certainly have determin'd for him.

This Disposition of the Nation, King *James*, if he had pleased, might have been sufficiently apprised of. When the King was discover'd at *Feversham*, the very Mob immediately paid him the Respect due to him, and return'd him the Money they had robb'd

robb'd him of; which he, agreeably to his usual Generosity, distributed amongst them. *This Adventure* (says an Author, whose Principles make him by no means fond of coming in to the Settlement upon the Notion of *Desertion*) *chagreen'd the Prince of Orange* (who very well knew, whatever his Inclinations were, 'twas impossible for him by Force to ascend the Throne) *but most of the People were glad of an Opportunity to convince the King, that there was no ill Design against his Person. The Peers and Privy-Council appointed the Lords M—on, A—y, Y—th, and F—m, to invite his Majesty to his Palace at Whitehall. And the King accordingly enter'd the City, as it were in Triumph, and went on to Whitehall with great Acclamations, Ringing of Bells, and Bonfires, with all other Proofs, that the People, who hated Popery, loved the King. While the King was at Salisbury, the chief Officers applied themselves to the Earl of Feversham, desiring him to assure his Majesty, That tho' upon any Occasion they would be ready to spill the last drop of their Blood in his Service, yet they could not in Conscience fight against a Prince, who was come over with no other*
Design

Design than to procure the Calling of a Free Parliament, for the Security of their Religion and Liberties. And after all the Noise that was made of the great Desertion of the King's Army, 'twas computed, (according to Mr. T—ll in his *Bibliotheca Politica*) that there was not much above One Thousand that went over to the Prince of Orange. And 'twas confidently reported (as the same Author says, p. 795.) even by the Officers of the King's Army, that the King might have found above Twenty Thousand Men, that would have stood by him to the last Man in his Quarrel against the Prince*.

Nor could any thing else be expected, if we consider the Characters of the Persons chiefly concern'd in the Revolution. They were not the meanest of the People engag'd against the Clergy, Nobility, and Gentry, as was the Case in the Civil War, which occasion'd King Charles to observe that he fought Gold against Dross; but the very Clergy,

* King James himself owns (after he had laid the Blame upon some particular Persons) that he well knew the greatest Part both of Officers and Soldiers in his Army were not faulty in their Allegiance, See his Letter to the Officers and Soldiers of the Army, given at St. Germain's en Laye, Feb. 14. 1688-9.

Clergy, Nobility, and Gentry themselves, which were embark'd in that great Affair, Men who from their Education, from their known Principles, and the whole Tenor of their Lives and Actions, had given the whole World all imaginable reason to believe, that whatever *extra-legal* Steps they might take to preserve the King and Government, they would never be guilty of *destroying* either. Nor did they thus combine together upon frivolous Causes, or feign'd Pretences of Reformation, from whence it might be conjectur'd, that tho' their outward Professions were plausible and fair, their real Design was getting the Government into their Hands, but for what King *James* himself must know belong'd to them by *Law* (tho' he might think that Law unjust) and what was esteem'd to be dearer to them than their very Lives. What private Designs upon the Crown the Prince of *Orange* might have, 'tis foreign to our Purpose to enquire. Suppose he had too great a Desire of ascending the Throne (which might perhaps put him upon doing some disobliging Actions to King *James*, in order to irritate him, and make him leave us, that he by that means might accomplish what by no other way

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he could have hoped for ; suppose, I say, this) yet it is evident the Nation in general meant nothing but resettling the Government, and doing the Prince of Orange that Justice which was due to him by the Laws of Nature and Nations. And this the King had notice of from those that went in to the Prince, as appears from the Letters of my Lord Churchill, the Prince of Denmark, and our late glorious Queen ; from which, because it contains the Sense of all of them, I shall take the Liberty to transcribe what follows.

As I am confident the Prince (of Denmark) did not leave the King with any other Design than to use all possible Means for his Preservation, so I hope you will do me the Justice to believe that I am not capable of following him for any other End. Never was any one in so unhappy a Condition, so divided between Duty and Affection to a Father and a Husband, and therefore I know not what to do, but to follow one to preserve the other. I see the general falling off of the Nobility and Gentry, who avow to have no other End, than to prevail with the King to secure their Religion, which they saw so much in Danger by the violent Counsels of the Priests, who, to
promote

promote their own Religion, did not care to what Danger they expos'd the King. I am fully persuaded that the Prince of Orange designs the King's Safety and Preservation, and hope all things may be compos'd without more Blood-shed, by the Calling of a Parliament.

This I verily believe was the general Sense of the Nation, on whose Loyalty and Fidelity King *James* had all imaginable reason to rely, if he would but have reflected on the Circumstances, and avow'd Design of all their Proceedings. 'Tis true, that in order to compass them, they took many Steps, which I would rather call *extra-legal* than *illegal*. For tho' they were contrary to the *Letter* of the Law (as the forming an Army without the King's Commission, and seizing any strong Holds are by our Laws High Treason) yet as they were done in Pursuance of the very same End that those Laws were made for, namely, the Preservation of the King and Government, they were most agreeable to the *Spirit* and Meaning of those very Laws, against the Letter of which they offended.

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Whoever considers the Nature of positive Laws, and that it is impracticable for them (and therefore they were never intended) to be comply'd with in all Instances, must own, that tho' the Proceedings at the Time of the *Revolution* were *Rebellion* in a *legal* Sense, yet they were not so in a *moral* one, as Rebellion signifies a forcible Attempt to dethrone the King. For tho' there were some forcible Attempts made, yet they were not to dethrone the King, but to preserve him. That this Distinction is no School Nicety, but countenanc'd and supported by the greatest Authority of the Kingdom, is evident, because the Application of it to several Instances has receiv'd the Approbation both of King and Parliament. 'Twas Treason by the Law for a Sheriff to march the *Posse Comitatus* beyond the Limits of his own Country. But that Treason is purely a Creature of the Law. For such an Action does by no means include the Idea of Treason, as you'll find by comparing it with the Definition of Treason. But the Law has ordered that Action to be look'd upon as Treason, not because it really is so in the Reason of the Case, but because that it may sometimes very conveniently be applied

plied to what is really Treason. But whenever it has another End and View it loses all its criminal Nature, and sometimes becomes even highly commendable. Thus 'twas Treason for Sir *R. Walsh*, High-Sheriff of *Worcestershire*, to pursue the Villains concern'd in the Gunpowder-Plot farther than his own Country; and he might by Law have been hang'd for it. But still none but a Fanatick in Politicks would have scrupled the venturing upon such an Action. And tho' the Law assign'd him a Reward of another Nature, King *James I.* thought fit to return him his most hearty Thanks for it. Parallel to this was the Management of the Earl of *Shrewsbury*, and it met with the like Approbation. Nay, even in King *James's* own Time, the very Parliament that would not upon any Account suffer *Papists* to be listed in the standing Army, were very well contented that they accepted of Commissions, in order to suppress *Monmouth's* Invasion, tho' it was exactly the same Crime in the Eye of the Law. In short, there is necessarily implied a Dispensability in all *positive* Laws, both human and divine, even from the very Reason of the Thing, as sufficiently appears from our *Saviour's*

Manner of determining the extraordinary Cases relating to the *Sabbath* and the *Shew-bread*. This Opinion you may see at large defended by Bishop *Sanderſon* in his admirable Lecture on *Salus Populi eſt ſuprema Lex*; which Maxim can never countenance rebellious *Reſiſtance*, tho' it may ſuperſede particular municipal Laws, becauſe the Law of Government is a Law of Nature.

You may ſtill perhaps object, that tho' upon the foregoing Conſiderations the King ought to have apprehended no Danger from his Subjects in general, tho' he ought to have reflected, that if the Nation was indeed in Arms, yet a foreign Army being landed, and Things brought into Confuſion, their being in Arms, and even in the Prince's Camp, was (at leaſt in their Intentions) the beſt Method that could then be taken; he might however have juſt reaſon to fear ſome private Aſſaſſination from the Prince's Friends, or ſome diſaffected Subjects, and that therefore he had ſufficient Grounds to withdraw his Perſon. To which I anſwer, That he might upon theſe Grounds have withdrawn himſelf; nay, he might even have gone to *France* upon no Grounds if
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he had pleased, for there was *then* no Law to deprive the *English* Monarchs of that Liberty. But then he ought to have left a Regency, for the Neglect of which there can be no imaginable Excuse offered. For the Nation had as yet by no means disown'd his Authority, but still continued to make the utmost Profession of Duty to his *Person*, though they had declared the warmest Resentment against his *Priests* and his *Religion*.

Nor can it be urged, that if he had left a Regency, no Body would have regarded them, since the Nation then must have been answerable for their Disobedience, and the King would have secured his Title by doing his Duty. But to do a thing merely because the People *might* have turn'd Rebels, can never be a Warrant for those Proceedings, which would have been only justifiable if they had *actually* turn'd Rebels, *i. e.* openly disown'd the King's Title and Authority. But this they were farther from doing when the King left them than before. For his Majesty own'd (in his Letter to the Lords, and others of his Privy-Council, given at *St. Germans en Laye* the 14th of *January*, 1688-9.) that *the People began to*

be undeceiv'd, and returned apace to their ancient Duty and Allegiance; and acknowledges, that if the Parliament had met, such a Settlement in all Probability would have been made, both in Church and State, as would have totally defeated his (the Prince of Orange's) ambitious and unjust Designs. He here imputes his Departure to his Fear of the Prince of Orange, not of his own People, who, by not having rejected him, had still a Right to be govern'd by him. This he himself seem'd too late to be sensible of, but at the same time alledges nothing that can excuse so grand an Omission. We were resolv'd (says he in the Letter abovementioned) at the same time to leave such Orders behind us, to you of our Privy-Council, as might best suit with the present State of Affairs; but that was altogether unsafe for us at that time. Never surely could an unfortunate Prince lie under a more unhappy Mistake! to think that was unsafe to be done, which was the only thing that could have secured his Title!

But whatever Reasons were afterwards thought proper to be alledged for his abandoning the Government, it is very much to be suspected, that as he shared the same
Fate,

Fate, so he acted under the same unhappy Influences as did formerly *Sigismond King of Sweden*; who (as it is related by *Puffendorf*, p. 511. of his Introduction to the History of *Europe*) seeing himself disappointed (in his Designs to ruin the Reformation) and restore the *Roman Catholick Religion*, resolved, by the Advice of the Poles, to leave the Kingdom and the Government in an unsettled Condition, hoping thereby to oblige them to be more pliable for the future. In these Circumstances the *Swedish Nation* assembled, and (tho' remarkable for their Loyalty) declared the Throne vacant of him, and his Infant Son *Uladislaus*, whom he had carried with him into *Poland*, and then devolved the Government upon Duke *Charles*.

The same Sense (as I have above observ'd) had the Generality of the *English Nation* of King *James's* Proceedings, as you may perceive from the Writings of that Time, of which I shall quote only Mr. *T——ll's* *Bibliotheca Politica*. Immediately (says he, p. 790.) after the King's leaving *Salisbury*, and coming to *Whitehall*, one of the first things he did after he was arrived, was to issue out a Proclamation for the Calling a new

Parliament, which was received with great Satisfaction by the whole Nation. Immediately upon this the King sent the Lords H----x, N----m, and G----n, to treat with his Highness upon those Proposals of Peace, which he then sent by them, and to which the Prince returned his Answer, the Heads of which are very reasonable, without demanding any other Security for himself and his Army, than the putting of the Tower and Forts about London into the Hands of that City. Now pray observe the Issue of all those fair Hopes. Before ever the Terms propos'd by the Prince could be brought to Town, the King following the ill Advice of the Popish Faction, instead of suffering the Elections for Parliament Men to proceed, as he had promised, and as was hoped for by us, all on a sudden ordered the Writs that were not sent down to be burnt, and a Caveat to be enter'd against those that had. At the same time he sent Orders to the Earl of F----m, to disband the Army, and dismiss all the Soldiers with their Arms. But I had forgot to put you in mind, that just before this the King had sent away the Queen with the Prince into France, and that she carried the Great Seal of England along with her, whereby it was plain the King
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intended to put it wholly out of his Power to issue out any Writs, or pass any publick Act, wherein the Great Seal should be used. And that this Seal was carried away, appears by its being not long since drawn up out of the Thames by a Fisherman's Net near Lambeth-Bridge, where it is supposed to have been thrown in by the Queen, or some of her Attendants, in her Passage over the Water. And farther, that the King was resolved wholly to quit the Government of this Kingdom (at least for the present) appears by his so speedy following of the Queen, within three Days after stealing from his Palace by Night in a Boat to Gravesend, and thence in a small Vessel to Feverham. And in p. 797. If the King had first applied to the Lords to mediate with the Prince of Orange, and they had refused to do it, or he to hear them, the King might then, I grant, have had sufficient Reason to declare to all the World that he was not fairly dealt with. But for him to go away only upon Pretence that his Person was under Restraint, when it really was not, plainly shew'd that he had no real Design of making an amicable End of those Differences, but either hoped to be restored from those Civil Dissentions he expected we should fall into upon his
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Departure, or else by the Arms of France. And p. 812. 'Tis very well known, that above a Fortnight before the King went away, the Lord D — and Mr. Brent did not stick to declare, that it was necessary that the King should withdraw himself: So that it is plain the Popish Faction knew of it long before it was done; and that it proceeded wholly from their Advice, appears further by a Letter to the King when he was at Salisbury, which can yet be produced. He was there told, that it was the unanimous Advice of all the Catholics at London, that he should withdraw himself out of the Kingdom, and leave us in Confusion, assuring him that he might within two Years return, and have his Ends of us.

If you will but consider the effectual Disappointment King *James* must have met with, as to his Designs of bringing in *Popery*, had he staid and call'd a Parliament; 'tis very reasonable to believe, that the Grief and Shame of being baulk'd in his Enterprizes, and the Apprehensions of what might possibly be determin'd with respect to his Son, was the true Reason of his Desertion. For as to what the King himself mentions (in his Reasons for withdrawing himself from *Rochester*) of the confining the Earl of
F---m,

F—m, the taking Possession of the Posts at *Whitehall*, and the sending a kind of an Order (as he calls it) for him to be gone out of his Palace ; these things (whatever Force they have in them) happen'd after the King's first Attempt to leave us ; but, without doubt, the true Reason of his Departure preceded it.

Notwithstanding these Considerations, from whence it may appear that King *James* did desert us, Mr. *C---r* insists, that our taking hold of this Pretence is contrary both to Equity and Generosity (since the King must not be pretended to know the Consequences of his abandoning us) and contrary to the Manner in which the *English* Nation treated former Kings. As particularly *Edward II.* and *Edward IV.* against whom, when they left their Thrones, 'twas never objected that they deserted the Kingdom. To which I answer, that every Man is suppos'd to know his Duty ; and if he neglects to be inform'd of it, he must stand to the Consequences. Even Mr. *Lesly* will allow, that *Ignorantia Juris non valet* is a good Maxim. Neither was it ungenerous for us to insist upon the Rigour of that Rule, if we consider the Necessities and Difficulties the Kingdom was then

then reduced to by King *James's* own Fault and ill Management. As to the Cases of *Edward II.* and *IV.* their Subjects had sufficiently declar'd against them before they fled, and therefore their Flight was justifiable.

Let us now see, on Supposition that King *James* did desert, what Effect such his Desertion could have on the *Chevalier*, granting him to be his Son. That the next Heir may be set aside by the Consent of King and People, I shall here take for granted; and that the People declar'd their Willingness to set aside the *Chevalier*, is too evident to require Proof. The only Question is, whether the King too did sufficiently declare his Consent. Now that the King did desert his People, is at least probable; that he refused to own his Desertion, is manifest. By deserting us, he lost all Title himself; by refusing to own his Desertion, he did consequentially declare his Consent for setting aside the *Chevalier*, at least during his Life; which is as much as if he had done it for ever, for the Nation can't be without a King. It will not be a good Objection to say, that this Declaration of the King and People was only consequential, or such as arose from

from the Nature of the then Proceedings, and that it was not expressly made in Parliament, as all other Things of that Nature use to be. For all that is essential to a Law, is its proceeding from the whole Legislative Power. Now the whole Legislative Power being not obliged to proceed always according to the usual Forms and Circumstances (which really are not necessary to the constituting of a Law) it can be no Objection against the Validity of that Law, that it wanted the usual Formalities. An absolute Monarch (to which I may compare the King and People) may usually publish his Edicts in such a Form; but if he pleases to alter his Method, the Edicts will still be as obligatory, since while they proceed from the declared Will of the Legislator, they have every thing that is essential.

The Second Argument for Submission to the Government, is that which grounds King *William's* Title on the Consequences of a just War. The Danger that the Maritime Powers were reduc'd to by the exorbitant Power of *France*, and the Opportunity King *James*, by his unjustifiable Administration, gave that ambitious Monarch of accomplishing his Designs (one of which

would doubtless have been the Extirpation of the Protestant Religion) and the Interest the Prince of *Orange* had in our Succession, gave him a just Pretence to make War upon King *James*. He perceiv'd the Kings of *England* and *France* had both the same Designs, and for that Reason were both equally his Enemies. These Considerations made him land in *England* with an Armed Force, either to induce King *James* to come into his Measures by Treaty, or to oblige him to it by Force. The Subjects of *England*, if they thought the Prince's Cause good, could not oppose him. They were oblig'd by the Laws of the Land not to resist their King; and they were bound in Justice not to resist the Prince, because that would be to fight in an unjust Cause. King *James* seeing his Affairs reduced to this Condition, being both unwilling to comply with the Prince's Demands, and yet apprehending the Prince would force him to it, chose to fly, and leave the Kingdom to his Rival, who by conquering the King and Prince, and dispossessing them, left the Throne vacant to the next Heir, against whom (to be sure) he had no Cause of War, and whom therefore he had no reason to set aside; nor could

could the People in Justice have suffer'd him to proceed any farther, had he attempted it.

I don't pretend to assert, that the Prince conquer'd the *English* Nation. No; 'twas impossible for all the Strength of *Holland* ever to hope for that. I only say, he conquer'd King *James*: and therefore had by the Laws of Conquest a Right to demand such Satisfaction, as would answer the great Ends and Design of his Exposition.

The general Objection against this Argument (which has been defended by the learned Bishop *Stillingfleet*, and the present Bishop of *Worcester*) may be comprised in these two Lines of Mr. *Dryden*,

*Conquest, an odious Name, was laid aside,
Where All submitted, None the Battel try'd.*
'Twas urged, that the King's Subjects ought to have defended him; that there could be no such thing as conquering the King without conquering the Nation; that therefore, *Non-assistance* was the same in Effect as *Resistance*, since one was employing a Power against him, which ought to have been employ'd for him; the other was a refusing to employ that Power for him, which he by the Laws of the Land had a Right to. But I reply, *First*, That this
Objection

Objection does not at all reach the Case of *Scotland*, where the Majority of the King's Subjects (among which were all the Bishops, and almost all the inferior Clergy) did actually assist him; and his Army led by the brave *Dundee* worsted King *William's* Forces (tho' a Victory bought with the Life of that gallant Man was (and proved) more Fatal to King *James's* Interest, than many Defeats.) Secondly, That as to *England*, where it must be own'd there was a general Submission without Bloodshed, it will be very difficult to conceive, how we could have defended the King, without engaging in an unjust War against the Prince of *Orange*, which is by all allow'd to be unlawful. I shall only add, that I believe, whoever will go about to solve this Difficulty, will, after he has done it, be ready to grant, that a reasonable and honest Man may be of the contrary Opinion.

There are others, and that a very considerable Party too (among whom are most of the Lawyers) who alledge, that they are not concerned to enquire, by what Right or Title a King ascends the Throne. 'Tis sufficient to constitute him the Object of their Obedience, that he has *Possession*. I shan't attempt

attempt to justify this Opinion from Reason, or the Scriptures, nor even from any Part of the Law of *England*, unless it be from the famous Statute made in the 11th of *Henry VII.* which as my Lord *Bacon* (and from him *Puffendorf*) observes, is a Law of a strange Nature. This Statute hinting in the Preamble at the various Misfortunes that had at different times befallen the Nation, from the contested Titles of *York* and *Lancaster*, declares and enacts it to be the Subjects *true Duty and Service of Allegiance to serve and defend the King for the Time being*; for the doing of which, no Body should for the future be call'd to account, unless they should *hereafter decline from their said Allegiance.*

The Objections against this Act are various, but have been at last reduced to one by the ingenious Author of the *Hereditary Right*; who gives up the Plea, that *Henry VII.* was not King *de Jure*, since he certainly was so *in Re Uxoris*. Nor does he insist upon the Pretence, that it was only an Indemnification from Punishment. For the Act expressly calls it the Subjects *true Duty and Service of Allegiance*, and in the last Clause adds a Penalty against those that

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should violate their *said Allegiance*. But he contends, that it can only be meant of a King *de Jure*, as he owns Henry VII. himself to have been. But this Pretence seems to carry greater Force with it than the rest, upon no other Account, than that it has been urged by so learned an Author. For, *First*, It would be a very strange Law indeed, and liable to the very same Objection, which this Author (justly perhaps) thinks Dr. *Higden's* Hypothesis expos'd to; if it was made for the Protection of Subjects, that fought in Defence of their lawful Kings. For (as he himself * says) *what Occasion was there for a new Law to establish a Privilege, which had been long a known Part of the Constitution, and the Birth-right of every English Subject; nay, I may add, and of every Subject in every Government upon the Face of the Earth? Secondly*, The Act of Parliament expressly mentions the *King for the Time being*; and the Preamble plainly refers to the late distracted Times, when that Distinction between Kings of Deed, and Kings of Right, just began so expressly

* Page 163.

expressly to be taken Notice of in our Statutes. *Thirdly*, 'Tis a Rule in Law, that the plain Words of a Statute ought never to be forsaken, unless there be a manifest Inconsistency in them ; which in this Case can't be pretended. *Fourthly*, The Suppositions on which this Author grounds all his Reasonings on this Law, are entirely groundless. For,

First, he * supposes (*how equitable soever such an Act*, as would justify the Subjects Submission to any King for the Time being, *might be in some Respects*) King Henry could never be moved to it, from a just and wise Calculation of any real Advantage that would accrue to him from it, but had Reason rather to apprehend the contrary. Now in this he is manifestly mistaken. For my Lord Bacon (who, as Chancellor of England, as a Gentleman bred up in this King's Granddaughter's Reign, and as the Historian of this King's own Life, must be allow'd a most competent Judge both of the Law and Policy of this Statute) alledges two very

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sufficient Motives. *This Law* (says * he) *did not want Parts of prudent and deep Foresight. For it did the better take away Occasion for the People to busy themselves, to pry into the King's Title; for that howsoever it fell, their Safety was already provided for. Besides, it could not but greatly draw unto him the Love and Hearts of the People, because he seem'd more careful for them, than for himself. And surely the Hearts of his Subjects are the greatest Security any Prince can wish for. I own, there was this Inconveniency in this Law (and what Law has no Inconveniencies?) That it would have render'd his Return more difficult, if he had once lost his Crown; but then 'twas a very proper Method to keep it on his Head.*

Secondly, He all along takes that for granted (which can never be allow'd him) that had Perkin Warbeck dispossess'd the King, he would still have consider'd him under the Character of one, that had been King de Jure. Whereas that would have been owning all his own Pretensions to the Crown

* In his History of the Reign of King Henry VII. in the *Compleat History of England*, p. 613.

Crown to have been unjust. No; However unjust a Pretender he was, he would certainly have assum'd to himself the Rights and Titles of the House of *York*, and have look'd upon all King *Henry's* Friends, as the Adherents of an Usurper. In short, throughout all his Reasonings upon this Act, there is this one general Mistake, That he rejects the plain literal Meaning of it, as it results from the express Words, and the Preamble of the Statute (which is always reckon'd the Key to it) purely because he can't reconcile the Prudence and Policy of King *Henry's* making such an Act, considering his Circumstances at that Time; which is as much as to say, that there was no such Act made, because in his Opinion there ought to have been no such Act made.

That this Act was never *virtually* repeal'd, as some have imagined, will be sufficiently evinc'd from this single Consideration, namely, that it was allow'd to be in Force both by the *Royal Martyr* (who understood Law as well as any Man in *England*) and by the Rebel-Parliament, tho' they disagreed in their Interpretation of it with each other; but neither of them with that Sense that I

have taken in it. And as to its being repealed by King *William*, I suppose the abovequoted Author is only in Jest, when he mentions that ; and therefore I shall not reply to him in Earnest. I can't forbear adding the Judgment of my Lord Keeper *Bridgeman*, at the Trial of the *Regicides* ; because 'twas at a Time when any Notions derogatory to the Rights of Monarchy would never have been admitted. Some of the Rebels pleaded this Act in their Behalf. My Lord Keeper allows the Force of this Act ; but denies the Application of it to them, for this Reason, Because King *Charles* was King *de Facto*, as well as *de Jure*.

The greatest Prejudices this Opinion labours under, is, that it would justify Submission to *Oliver's* Usurpation : since he had the *Supreme Power*, tho' he was not *King*. And it must be confess'd, that were this Notion supported by Arguments drawn from Scripture, or the Reason of Government, it would equally conclude for any *Supreme Power*, as well as a King. But I only deduce it from the 11th of *Henry VII.* and therefore since it has no other Foundation than that Act, it can have no larger Extent
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than that Act allows it. And King *Henry* did very wisely in confining our Submission to a *King*. For tho' it may be thought unreasonable for a whole Nation to be oblig'd to dispossess a present King for the sake of any one single Person; yet 'twill by no means be thought hard to run any Hazards in order to preserve our Monarchy and Constitution. And accordingly the truly Loyal Mr. *Penruddock* confess'd on his Trial, that had *Cromwell* been King, he had by our *English* Constitution, which takes such Care of our Monarchs, been guilty of High Treason.

I have now gone through Three several Schemes, each of which has been much valued and esteem'd by Persons of great Reputation for their Learning and Integrity; and I hope I have satisfied you, that they all have their considerable Probabilities. 'Tis not necessary, that you or I should believe any one of them to be *strictly true*. All of them we cannot admit, as being not perfectly consistent with each other. 'Tis sufficient, if there are in each of them, or even in any one of them, such considerable Probabilities, as may incline honest and

reasonable Men to embrace them. Because,

Secondly, Such *Probabilities* of Right, join'd with *actual Possession*, make the *Possessor* to become *Rightful* and *Lawful* King.

But (you'll say) is not this to suppose, that there is more in the Whole, than there is in all its Parts? You'll tell me, I grant (at least for Argument's sake) that none of the abovemention'd Schemes is *strictly true*. How therefore can a good Title be made out by such Proofs as are not absolutely conclusive? *Actual Possession* can't alter the Nature of any thing; for *quæ ab initio non valent, ex post facto convalescere non possunt*. To which I answer, that tho' for the Reasons you alledge, those *Schemes* can't be the *proper Cause* of a good Title; yet they may be the *Occasion* of one; or they may be attended with such Circumstances, as will naturally in themselves produce a good Title. And for the other Part of your Argument, That Possession can't alter the Justice or Injustice of any Settlement, you may receive a Reply from whence you took your Objection. That Maxim (says *Grotius*,
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Lib. 2. cap. 4. §. 11.) Hanc habet Exceptionem, nisi Causa nova jus per se parere Idonea intercesserit ; (i. e.) This Maxim must be understood with this Exception, unless there has interven'd a new Cause in itself capable of creating a Right. Now that those Schemes, tho' they may not be the *proper Cause*, yet are the *Occasion* of a just Title ; or that they are attended with such Circumstances, as will naturally in themselves produce one, and consequently that there has interven'd a new Cause in itself capable of creating a Right, tho' there had been some intrinsic Defect in the first Settlement ; I shall endeavour to shew by these following Considerations.

First, Tho' the above-mention'd Arguments for Submission to the present Settlement should be supposed not strictly conclusive ; yet we must suppose too, that there are such Probabilities in them, as may incline honest and reasonable Men to embrace them. And in Fact they have been embrac'd by so great a Number of Persons (whom, 'till the contrary appears, we ought to esteem reasonable and honest Men) as have effectually secur'd the present Settlement for Twenty-seven Years ; which Settlement

tlement there is no way of rectifying (because those that have submitted to it, don't think they are at Liberty to suffer it to be alter'd) but by a Civil War. Now that a Civil War cannot be justified on this Occasion, is evident, because a Civil War entirely puts an End to Society, and in this Case must occasion the Loss of numberless Lives, and the Ruin of a great many Families; which Blood-shed and Devastation is supposed to be with respect to them entirely undeserv'd, because 'tis granted in this Argument, that they are induc'd to support this Settlement by such Probabilities as may have an Influence upon reasonable and honest Men. If therefore the Life of one Man is not to be taken away, but upon the most manifest Evidence, upon Proofs that are *Luce Meridianâ clariora*; how clear and apparent ought that Title to be, that can make us engage in a bloody War, that must in all human Probability take away the Lives of Thousands? But to suppose the *Chevalier's* Title so clear, is contrary to the Supposition. Wherefore,

Secondly, Tho' there should be a greater Probability on the *Chevalier's* Side, yet since there are considerable Probabilities too on the

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the Part of the Government, which must we run the Hazard of injuring? either one Person, if he is in the right; or Millions, if he should happen to have no Title? Or rather, does not his Title cease of itself, and consequently our keeping him out become no Injury, when his Title, for want of Clearness, can never take Effect, but with the certain Misfortunes, and extensive Calamities of a Civil War? For tho' where the Injury I should do by determining amiss, is equal, I would certainly determine for him that has the greatest Probability on his Side; yet, if by determining wrong on one Side I should injure only one Man, and by determining wrong on the other Side I should injure Thousands; if on neither Side I was *absolutely clear*, 'twould be undoubtedly my Duty to decide the Controversy in favour of the latter, because 'tis reasonable for me to risk the injuring one Man, rather than of many Thousands.

Thirdly, The very Nature of Government obliges us to submit to a King in Possession, whose Title is founded on probable Reasons. For the Subject of Government is so nice and intricate, even to the wisest Heads, and appears so perfectly unintelligible

intelligible to barely common Capacities; that should every superior Probability, that could be urged in behalf of altering the Government, be hearken'd to, no Government could ever be in Safety. How demonstrably plain is it, that a lawful Power can limit the Succession? and yet how many Probabilities has the Author of *Hereditary Right* produc'd to shew, that the *Stuart Family* succeeded contrary to such a Limitation? If therefore every Person, that could not exactly reply to those specious Arguments which the Author abovemention'd makes use of, should be oblig'd in Conscience to be influenc'd by them; we should be bound to alter the present Government, not in behalf of the *Chevalier*, but of some Body whom that Author had no Intention to serve. I short, such Principles, as, if they were admitted, would disturb *all* Governments, can never be an Argument for *any*. And since Government was design'd for the Service of the meanest People, as well as the most learned, a Prince had as good have no Title, as one that is not clear enough to be apprehended by the Generality of the Kingdom. For otherwise Government, which was design'd for
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the Peace of Mankind, must necessarily itself be the greatest Cause of Contention. As this Reasoning is founded in the very Nature of Government, so is it supported too by the Laws and Constitution of *England*. For,

Fourthly, Our Laws in order to prevent Disturbances, are very tender how they dispossess any Man; nor will they suffer any Man to be dispossessed, unless there appears the clearest Reason for it. And because the Disturbances on such publick Occasions are far greater, the Reason of the Law holds more strongly with respect to disputed Kingdoms, all Controversies about which ought to be determined (as near as possible) by the allowed Principles of the municipal Laws. *Credi quemque* (says Grotius, L. 2. c. 7. §. 11.) *id de sua successione statuiffe, quod Lex aut Mos habet Populi*. To the same Purpose says Puffendorf (L. 7. c. 7. §. 11.) *Where there is nothing ordained particular, the same Order is to be observed in Kingdoms as in private Inheritances*. The Reason of this Law, as I said before, is the Peace of the Society, which can't consist with the unsettling of Possessions, except on the plainest Evidence, because *then* only

it is possible for the Generality of a Nation to agree and acquiesce in the same Sentiments.

Fifthly, As it is agreeable to the Principles of common Law, that a King with such a Title as I have above described, should be deemed rightful and lawful King, so may we conclude the same to be the Will of the first Institutors of our Succession. For, *First*, All political Writers agree, that in all extraordinary Cases, which are not supposed to fall within the reach of particular Laws, we must presume that to be their Will, which, had they been now alive, it is reasonable for us to believe they would have resolved upon. (See p. 43, 44.) And they do as unanimously agree, that in the Instance of a contested Title, the first Founders must be understood to be on the side of him that with a probable Right is in Possession. In which Case they must be supposed, from the reason of the thing, to have superseded the other's Right, though he may have greater Probabilities, for the Good of the rest of the Family, as well as of the Nation. *For altho' it is very likely (says Puffendorf, L. 7. c. 7. §. 11.) that the Father bears an equal Affection to all his*
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Children, yet if he be wise he will so far moderate and restrain it, as not to weaken the hereditary Estate, on which the Security and Honour of the Family in a great measure depend. And he shall be presumed to have taken this Resolution, if he hath not expressly declared any thing to the contrary. And indeed, if one considers, that tho' the Law of Government be a Law of Nature, yet the Law of Succession is only a mere positive Law, made to avoid the Miseries which the Contests about Elections generally plunge a Nation into ; certainly, when for want of a manifest Clearness in the Title, we should be hurry'd into the very same Misfortunes that attend Elections, unless we submit to the Possessor ; that very Consideration must be an Argument *ex absurdo* why we should acknowledge him that is in Possession. For (as Dr. Sanderſon informs us, *Prælect. 5. Sect. 19. de Obligatione Conscientiæ*) *Quicquid finis alicujus gratiâ faciendum est, eatenus fieri oportet, in quantum ei fini consequendo necessarium, vel utile videbitur : i.e.* Every positive Law is so far only obligatory as the Reason of it extends. But it would be as unreasonable (as *Grotius* observes, *L. 2. c. 4. §. 8.*) that an innocent

nocent People should spend their Blood and Treasure for two contending Princes, as it would be for an Orphan to spend his Estate at Law in a Trial who should be his Guardian, or that a Ship should be sunk in the Contest who should be the chief Mariner. Therefore he rightly adds, *Tum vero imperia tandem aliquando in certo & extra controversiæ aleam constitui, humanæ societatis interest, quam quæ adjuvant conjecturæ, favorabiles putandæ sunt.*

These Sentiments have been confirm'd also, as far as occasion has offered, by the Practice of our own Government. For, *First*, All those testamentary Dispositions mentioned by the Author of the *Hereditary Right* go upon this very Principle, That upon some extraordinary Occasions one who had not Proximity of Blood was to be own'd for King. *Secondly*, From the determination of the Parliament in the Case of *Richard III.* Yet nevertheless forasmuch as it is considered that the most part of the People is not sufficiently learned in the foresaid Laws and Customs, whereby the Truth and Right in this behalf of likelihood may be bid, and not clearly known to all the People, and therefore put in doubt and question; and even this

Law,

Law, that the Court of Parliament is of such Authority, and the People of this Land of such a Nature and Disposition, as Experience teacheth, that Manifestation or Declaration of any Truth made by the three Estates of this Realm, and by Authority of the same, maketh before all things most certain and faithful quieting of Mens Minds, and removeth the Occasions of Doubt and seditious Language.---Therefore (say they) we do chuse Richard, as far as in us lies, and as it appertaineth to him to be chosen. Rot. Parl. Exact Abridgment, Fol. 714. The same Sense is also express'd in the first Article of the Treaty made between the Duke of York and Henry VI. Notwithstanding the clear and indisputable Title of Richard Duke of York, the said Duke tenderly desiring the Wealth and Prosperity of this Land, and to lay aside all that may be a Trouble to the same, and considering the long Possession of the said King Henry, who hath all his Time been reputed King of England, is contented and agreed that the said King Henry be, during his natural Life, reputed King of England. This way the Historian tells us was pitch'd upon by the Lords, because the Ar-

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guments were thought strong on both Sides. And it is observable, that the Judges, who did not think themselves capable of determining the Contest between King *Henty VI.* then in Possession, and the Duke of *York*, who claim'd by Proximity of Blood, did afterwards determine *for the Duke against the King.* This shews that he whose Title was probable, and who had been submitted to by the States, was by them esteem'd a lawful King.

To these Considerations I shall only add the Opinion of Dr. *Sanderson* in his fifteenth Section of the above-quoted Lecture. *If (says he) in an hereditary Kingdom there is a doubtful Right between two or more Competitors, every good Subject ought to obey the Possessor as his lawful Prince.* And then he instances *in the disputed Titles of York and Lancaster in England, and of the Competitors for the Crown of Scotland after the Death of King Alexander;* and then concludes with observing, *that by the Consent of all Nations the Laws are to be interpreted favourably with respect to the Possessor.* But lest you should imagine that by a doubtful
Right

Right he means a Right *equally probable*, he has declared in the fourteenth Section, that *nothing can be a proper Ground for a Subject's doubting to obey the Possessor, unless it be either certainly evident, or at least strongly probable, that there is another Person with a better Right. Nisi aut certo constet, aut saltem valde sit probabile*: unless the Case be so plain (says he) it does not belong to the Subject too curiously to enquire into his Prince's Title.

To conclude therefore: If the several Schemes I have run over have their Probabilities, either those Probabilities of Right, joined with actual Possession, must give King GEORGE a just Title, or no Government can ever be safe; since if it were lawful to attempt the altering it upon any Reason that falls short of a Certainty, or a Probability next to a Certainty, the Subject of Government is so nice, that upon almost any Occasion Men would think themselves oblig'd to disturb it. But that would be a most absurd Consequence, and is disproved from the manifest Injuries that

it would plunge innocent People into, from the Unreasonableness of setting one Man in Competition with so many Thousands, from the common Law of our Land, from our national Determinations, and the most rationally presum'd Consent of the first Founders of our Constitution. All which Considerations taken together, are that *nova causa*, that new intervening Reason, which *Grotius* says, creates a Right, that could not arise either from Possession, or the above-mentioned Probabilities of Right alone, but which that Possession and those Probabilities were the first occasion of.

I shall only add, that tho' nothing I have said in this Paper should be deemed sufficient to make King GEORGE's Title evident, it is enough if the Title of the *Chevalier* be but even doubtful upon any of the Accounts above-mentioned, since it is allow'd by all Mankind that in a doubtful Case Possession gives a Right.

Thus, Sir, you have seen what I can say for King GEORGE's Title. I shall be amply rewarded for my Attempt if it gives
you

you Satisfaction. But be the Event what it will, my Intention of serving you will be sufficient to justify me in professing myself.

Your sincere Friend,

And most humble Servant,

A. B.



your satisfaction. But as the House will
 be well, my intention of doing you will
 be sufficient to satisfy me in procuring

Your obedient servant

Wm. Lloyd Garrison

A. D.



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II

T H E
D E B A T E
A B O U T T H E
R E P E A L
O F T H E

Corporation and Test Acts,

B R I E F L Y
S U M M ' D U P *and* D E T E R M I N ' D .

W I T H
Some R E M A R K S, shewing, that
the R E P E A L of these A C T S will never
produce *Peace* and *Union* among *Protestants*,
as is weakly pretended; but rather prove
a constant Occasion of *fresh Feuds* and *Ani-*
mosities.

D E B A T E

R E P E A T

CONSTITUTION AND LAWS

OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

AND OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



T H E
D E B A T E

About the REPEAL of the

Corporation and Test Acts.

TH O' We have flattered our selves that the great Indulgence granted to Dissenters, greater than any other Nation ever granted in the like Circumstances, might have smoothed their Tempers, and abated the Keenness of their Resentments against the National Church; yet of late Years we have seen a *Spirit* raised among them, and gradually diffused through their Writings, which was calculated to ripen *the Project*, that is now drawing to a *Crisis*. Their celebrated Mr. *Pearce* informed us some Years ago, that we had

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much deceived our selves in imagining that they thought Communion with the *Church of England* to be lawful, and that their Opinions were much the same as ever. And from all Hands we had Intimations, that the *Occasional Conformists*, a Political rather than a Religious Sect, (for their Principles are equally condemned by all Religious Parties) who were supported by a Great Man, that was for a long time their Conductor, meant nothing, but to evade the Restraints laid upon them by the *Corporation and Test Acts*; that they still judge *constant Communion* with us to be *sinful*, and barely submitted to this *single Compliance* out of *Necessity*, and in Hopes that (as God ought to be worshiped in the *best Manner*) they should be able at a *convenient Season*, to reform the Errors, and supply the Defects of the poor *imperfect Church of England*; that therefore they still agreed in the *main Point* with their more *rigid Brethren*, and only took a more effectual Way to bring about the wish'd-for Reformation; that, notwithstanding all these specious Pretences, they were suspected as Secular Men by the conscientious Dissenters, and found themselves sinking daily lower in their Fa-
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vour and Esteem; and that therefore their *grand Project* was to be put in Execution *as soon as possible*. In order to hasten that Design, their Forces were to be augmented, and all Parties, however different in their Views, were to be invited into their Alliance. Deists and Libertines are found to hate *all* religious Establishments. The Arians and Socinians dislike the *present*. The former will be sure to plead, that all *Distinctions* and *Favours* will bias the Understanding, and cramp Free-Thinking; while the latter know they can never erect their *New* Fabrick, till they have pull'd down the *Old* Building. Others, whose Brains are intoxicated with the very Name of Liberty, however falsely so called, and whose Heads are filled with such Romantick Notions of it, as no Republick, either ancient or modern, ever practised upon, and no Government can ever subsist under, puzzle their Understanding about *natural and unalienable Rights*, which they carry so far as to declare themselves in a *State of War* with all, who shall preclude them from these *imaginary* Privileges, and to threaten us with extorting by Violence, what they cannot gain from us by a more peaceable Method. So far they proceed
against

The DEBATE concerning the

against allowing *any* Test in Favour of the Church of *England*. But when they would practise upon more Pious Christians, they terrify them with the Prostitution of the Holy Sacrament, which in some occasions open Profaneness, in others secret Hypocrisy. So that if *some* Test may be retain'd, the *present*, at least, must be altered; and then they may possibly get something by the *Change*. Thus from whatever Quiver the Arrow be drawn, so the *Church of England* be but shot at, our good Friends will be contented to view the Wound with Pleasure.

To all this it may fairly be replied in *general*, that the Argument of Self-Defence will justify us in keeping the Dissenters out of *Power*; *that Power* which they always abused, when they enjoy'd it; *that Power* which even already, in the Gaiety of their Hearts, they menace us with feeling, as soon as they shall be qualified to dispense *such Favours* to us. For one of their *unnatural Advocates* has declared, that there ought to be no Test but against such as are for Establishments (and he knows there can, in the Nature of the Thing, be no secure Establishment without some Test, for his own Argument implies as much) that

that is, against, at least, nine Parts in ten of the whole Nation. And is this the way to unite all Protestants? *viz.* to disoblige nine Parts, in order to gratify the ambitious Views of the tenth? If the Dissenters heartily mean what they pretend, let them shew it by sitting down contented with what they enjoy. The Church of *England* neither *can* nor *ought* to be easy, if that Establishment, which is ratified by all the Laws of God and Man, be render'd *precarious*, and *unsafe*. And that we know will be her Case, in proportion as the Interest of her Enemies increases, who from their Principles can never want *Will* to do, whatever their *Power* shall enable them to perform. Since therefore from History and Theory we know what we are to expect, we should act like Men infatuated, and fall unpitied, if we ever committed ourselves to their Care. The more they are indulged, the more they crave; and what is reported to have been said formerly by a Great Minister, of a certain Friend of theirs, *viz.* that he had the quickest Digestion of any Gentleman in *England*, may be applied, with too much Truth, to the perpetual grasping of this People after Power. It was the fatal Policy
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of good King *Charles's* Reign, to be always listening to the repeated Demands of these unsatisfied Men, 'till it appeared that they meant nothing less than the total Overthrow of Church and State. Let that Example be sufficient to teach us Caution. We have already granted them what *in Conscience* we ought to grant, an ample Liberty of worshipping GOD according to their own Sentiments. It is high time now, in our Turn, to consider where, in *Prudence*, we ought to stop. All *Europe* has thought it lawful to refuse Accessions of Power, when they are *morally certain* what Use would be made of it. If one Side must be *superior*, (and, in the Nature of Things, both cannot LONG be equal) I hope we are not now to chuse where to fix the Preference.

Here we might rest the Point, having shewn the Necessity we lie under to keep the Constitution upon its old Foundation : But since one of the *Repealers* has had the Impudence to assert, That *neither Truth nor Charity can be expected from an Advocate for our Cause*, give me leave to try whether all their showy Reasonings will not admit of both a short and clear Reply. The Repealer's favourite Argument is, that

a *Capacity* for Places (They must mean a *Legal Capacity*, for of their *Natural Capacity* there is, at present, no Dispute) is the *Natural* and *Unalienable* Right of every Subject. Now, how a *Legal* can arise from a *Natural* Right, will appear to all strict Reasoners pretty unintelligible. But, perhaps, they mean a Right founded in the Nature of Government, which they shall claim the Benefit of, when they can shew it. I know of nothing *essential* to Government, but *Obedience* on the one hand, and *Protection* on the other. Properly speaking, no Subject, *as such*, whether Churchman or Dissenter, has any *Natural* Right to a *Legal Capacity* for Places; and if every Monarch in *Europe* should take it into his Head to admit no Men into Places, whether Civil or Military, but such as were Six Foot high, tho' we might complain of his *Prudence*, we should have no Ground to accuse him of *Injustice*. It is, in short, no Part of the Civil Contract, nor was ever understood to be so by any Nation upon the Face of the Earth. This our Countrymen were so sensible of, that upon the late happy Settlement, when it was obvious to them to suppose that our late Sovereign might

might be inclined to prefer his *German* Subjects, they provided against it by a particular Law, well knowing that his *British* had no *Natural* Right to engross his Favours. And if any King may dispose of his Preferments as he pleases, I mean in Point of Natural Justice, he may, upon any Occasion, *declare* he will do so; and if he may declare he will do so, he may, in a proper manner, *enact* it by a Law. But, admitting this Capacity for Places to be the *Natural* Right of all Subjects, how will the *Repealer* prove it to be *Unalienable*? There are no Natural Rights *Unalienable*, but where they are the Consequences of *Unalterable Duties*. The Want of this Distinction has occasioned all the Confusion that appears in the *Repealer's* Argument: For Instance, it is my *Unalterable Duty* to worship GOD, therefore I have an *Unalienable Right* to perform that Duty. But as for all other Rights, we may part with them, or sell them, as we judge most for our own Advantage. Thus, not only single Men, but whole Nations, act every Day, both with respect to their natural as well as their acquired Properties; and what we might do for ourselves in a *State of Nature*, our Governors

vernors can do for us in a *State of Government*. From hence it follows, that *Persecution* cannot be charged upon us, because *Persecution* always implies something *unjust* in its Idea, or at least a needless Severity in the Execution. By this Definition all the Popish Persecutions may be tried and be condemn'd. Nor is it a Breach upon *Civil Liberty*, since nothing is done but by our own Consent, *i.e.* by our Representatives: Nor are they Usurpers in the Exercise of their Power, since they do nothing but what is for the Peace and Quiet of the People in general, to which the Advantages of particular Persons must always give Place. But if our Governors can incapacitate some Men for Places without any *Impeachment of their Justice*, yet is it consistent with the Nature of Virtue and Religion thus to cramp their Free-thinking, and byass their Understandings by Positive Encouragements on one Side, and Negative Discouragements on the other? Now I will readily allow, that the more disinterested we are in Matters of Religion, the more we shall approve ourselves both to God and Man: And yet our Saviour has threatened *Hell* to those who reject his Gospel,

and promised *Heaven* to those who accept it. In short, the Nature of Man is such, that if Men were left quite to themselves, *a general Carelessness and Ignorance* would be the necessary Consequence, both in Religion and Morality, and every thing else: For which Reason all Governments have always provided Instructors for the People in every thing that was necessary for them both to know and do. This possibly might, in some measure, byass them; but that is unavoidable, and the other Way would prove the more fatal. Governors should take care not to tempt Men beyond what they can bear, not to bring upon their People such *justus Metus, qui in Virum bonum cadere potest*; but to be as mild and tender, as the Nature of human Affairs can permit. From hence arises the Duty incumbent upon all Governors to Establish and Protect the True Religion: Natural and Revealed Religion is not an indifferent Matter, like Philosophy, that Gentlemen may amuse themselves with, if they please, for their Entertainment; but what equally concerns all, and what all, in *some measure*, are obliged to know and practise. But it is evident, that nothing can reach all Degrees

degrees and Sorts of Men, except settled Rules, and appointed Methods, which must carry *Authority enough* at least to create Regard and Attention, and *Encouragement enough* to engage our Application. Now if Religion is to be general, and no Body but the Magistrate can make it so, it follows necessarily, that the Care of Religion is the greatest Part of the Magistrate's Duty: And thus, in Fact, we see it was by GOD's own Appointment among the *Jews*; and the Prophecies declare, that it should be so afterwards among Christians; which of it self is sufficient to shew the Lawfulness of the Thing contested: And thus it has been always over all the World. I know the State of the Primitive Christians will be objected to me by the *Repealers*; but let them remember, that they lived under a sort of a Theocracy. The constant Miracles, the perpetual Persecutions, and the supernatural Assistances received under them, and the great Attachment and Affection which they had for their illustrious Bishops, who sealed that Doctrine at their Death, which they had taught throughout their Lives, were assistances superior to what we can hope to receive from the Civil Magistrate.

gistrate. It appears then that the Civil Power must *support* Religion, that it can only be supported by *Establisments*, that no Establishment can be secure without a *Test*; some Test therefore must be allowed: Nor does any Dissenter hereby *suffer*, in the proper Sense of the Word, which in Argument ought always to be observed. To say, he loses what he has a *Right to*, is *petere Principium*, and has been already disproved. To say, he does *not enjoy* what otherwise he *might*, is true indeed, but nothing to the Purpose, and proves only the Wisdom of the Government, who dispose of their Favours in a more prudent Manner.

Well then, if a *Test* be necessary, is our *Sacramental Test* also defensible? I answer briefly, *Yes*, and upon this Principle: It is lawful to use the Sacrament, or any other sacred Rite to any other religious Purpose, which it will suit, (and I hope the Preservation of God's pure Religion is a religious Purpose) provided it is not *inconsistent* with the Ground and original End for which it was ordained; if there were *twenty* religious Ends served by it, provided the *Primary* one be chiefly respected, there will lie no Objection. St. Paul himself, though he declares

declares that the original Intention of the Lord's Supper was to shew forth the Death of Christ, till he came, in *Chap. x.* of the same Epistle, *Ver. 17.* argues from it, to another Purpose; *viz.* to demonstrate the particular Unity, which ought always to be maintained and acknowledged by all the Members of Christ's Church. That Verse should have been translated more accurately after this Manner: "Because the Bread
" [or Loaf] is one; We, though [Per-
" sonally] many, are one Body, for (as a
" Symbol of our Unity) We are all Par-
" takers of that one Bread, [or the same
" Loaf.]" Here the scrupulous Gentle-
men may take Notice, that *this Circumstance* of partaking of the same Loaf, was pitched upon by the Apostle, not to commemorate the Death of Christ, (to which End it doth not contribute) but to prove the distinctive Unity of the Christian Society, and indeed most of the other Parts of the Christian Religion; *viz.* the same Faith, the same Baptism, the same Worship, &c. all from the same Inference; but it was not the *primary* Design, or *highest* End of any of them to enforce that Conclusion, tho' from all of them it naturally follows. Herein then we

tread in the very Footsteps of the Apostle, by making it a Proof or Evidence of our keeping up the Unity of the Christian Body, as the Scriptures enjoin us: and where *that Test* does not appear, we think it improper to confer the Favour of Civil Power. This then is our Case; whenever we receive the Sacrament, we do it to commemorate the Death of Christ, but the Circumstances of Time and Place, the Reason why we receive at this Time, and in such a particular Church, (which Circumstances are no Part of the Sacrament) is to give the Government Security, that we approve of the *Publick Religion*. It is not *proper* therefore to say that we ever *receive the Sacrament* for a Place, we always do it *only* to commemorate the Death of Christ; but we commemorate the Death of Christ with *these additional Circumstances*, because those Circumstances prove our Approbation of the national Church. 'Tis never therefore the *Receiving of the Sacrament*, (for then receiving it *any where*, or at *any Time*, would produce the same Effect) but the *Circumstances* attending its Reception that qualify Men for publick Employment. The *Repealers* perhaps will grant, that thus it
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ought to be; but, say they, many Men prophane the Sacrament by acting *only* upon secular Views: I am afraid it is too true, and so it is with respect to Oaths, and all the Laws of God and Man, which where-ever they become disagreeable to be observed, we lie under a Temptation to sin. Shall all these Things therefore be set aside? I am sure, they themselves will not push the Point so far. Before I clear this Matter, I must make one Remark, which is, That the *Profanation of the Sacrament* is no Grievance to the *Dissenters as such*, and therefore they need be under no *particular* Concern about it. It is, indeed, a great Scandal and Offence to *all good Christians*, whenever they see any of the Gospel Ordinances abused; but still that is no part of the present Debate between us about admitting Dissenters into Power. To enter a little further into this Matter; I hope I have above proved the Sacramental Test to be *defensible*, and that therefore it is not necessary to change it. I will now enquire, Whether it *can* be changed upon the present Foot of Affairs? and if it *can*, what must necessarily succeed in its Place?

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In the famous Act of Union, it was declared, That all Laws *then in Force* for the *Establishment* and *Preservation* of the Church of *England*, and the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government thereof, should be *in full Force for ever*; and be an *Essential* and *Fundamental Part* of it. I have hitherto conversed with no Man but what agrees in the Meaning of these Words: But, as I will not offer to prescribe to the Parliament, I shall only observe, that should they judge this *remarkable Clause* to be one of the *preliminary Articles* of the *Union*, I believe they will in *consequence* judge also that a Petition brought to them for the Repeal of *such an Article* is *coram non judice*; for how can they pretend to *alter*, what by a previous Contract made between two independent Nations (from both which the *British* Parliament derive their united Powers) was declared to be *unalterable*.

It may be pretended, that the Parliament of *Great Britain* has all the Powers which the Parliaments of *England* and *Scotland* had formerly; and so they have in all Instances, except the Cases by themselves excepted, which are the inviolable

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Pacta Conventa between the two Nations: They *have* the same Power in all other Instances, because it was given them by the original Constituents; they *have it not* in these, because it was denied them by the same. The present Parliament being only the *Representative* of the two original Parliaments, can go no further than their *first* Commission reaches: But what if any of these *fundamental* Articles should grow to be *impracticable* or *intolerable*, is there no Power in the Nation that can abolish them? Yes, there is in the *Nation*, but not in the *present Parliament*. When the same Objection was made about another preliminary Article before the late Earl Cowper, I am informed that he made this Reply; namely, That to effect the desired Alteration, it was in his Opinion necessary that the Parliament should, by an Act, suspend their Session, and resolve themselves into two Parliaments, which for a limited Time, & *pro hac Vice*, should sit at *London* and *Edinburgh*, and that, infirm as he was, he would rather travel himself on foot to *Edinburgh*, (were he of that Nation) than consent to the *Change* after any other Manner. Nor is it any Wonder, that great Man should

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express these Sentiments, when they contain nothing but the unanimous Doctrine of all the celebrated *political* Writers in *Europe*. It will be said, this will make it extremely difficult to alter *Fundamentals*: It is true, and it was always intended that it should be extremely difficult to alter *Fundamentals*. The Contract between the *Government* and the *Proprietors* of the *Funds* falls within the Compass of this Reasoning; the *Proprietors* are not, in *this Action*, to be considered as *Subjects* of *England*, included in the grand *Representative* of the People, but as the *contracting Party*, and in the same Light, as if they were all of them *French* or *Spaniards*; and in this, as well as all other Cases, it is equally true, that no Law can abolish a *Contract*, but that it must be either faithfully fulfilled, or dissolved by the mutual Consent of the two contracting Parties, or of those, who by Virtue of the first Contract stand in their Place. But to return, if this be a Digression; 'tis laid down as a Maxim among Political Writers, that the *Society* is greater than the *Legislature*: In some Countries it is so in many Cases, in other Countries in fewer. To the *Society* belong all the *Casus extra Regimen*, to the

the Legislature all *intra Regimen*: I will explain this by a clear Instance. The whole Legislature can, in general, do what they please with respect to *governing* us; but if any thing so extravagant could be imagined, as that they should attempt (as is reported of King *John*) to *sell* us under a foreign Dominion, suppose of *France* or *Spain*, would not the Society without Doors deny their Jurisdiction, and declare all their Acts *null* and *void*, as being contrary to the very *Meaning* and *Intent* of our Government? 'Tis a great Mistake therefore to assert *in Grofs*, that the Legislature can do every thing; their *political Omnipotence* is restrained by the Laws of God, by the Laws of Right and Wrong, by the Nature and End of Government, by the Commissions they may in some Countries receive from their Principals, and always, and every where by their own *Contracts*. There is doubtless the same supreme Power in all Nations, but in some Places more of it is quiescent in the *Society*, in others more of it vested in the *Legislature*.

But if the Parliament should look upon the *Corporation* and *Test Acts* not to be included within the *Fundamental Preliminaries*,

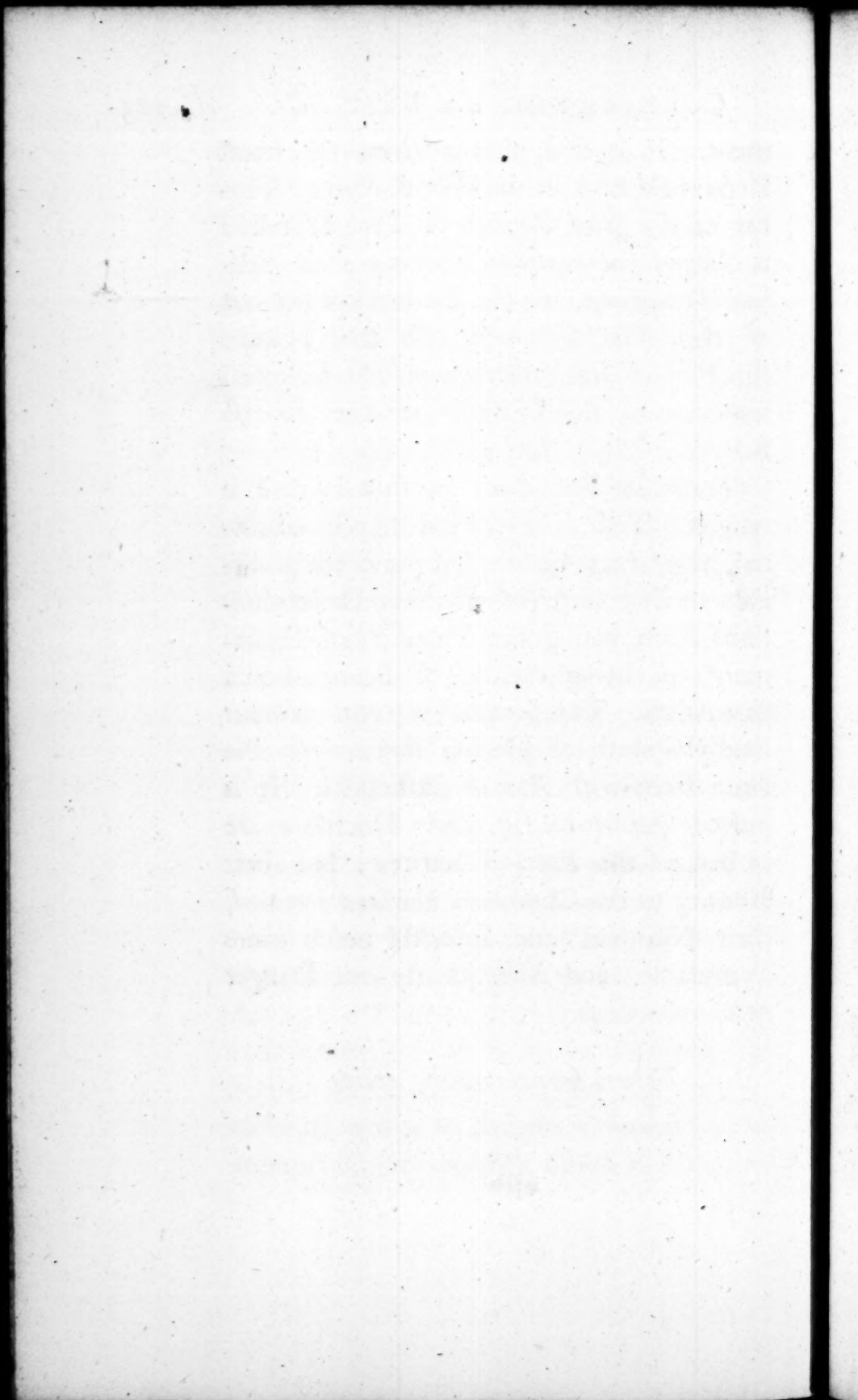
ries, and by Consequence repealable like ordinary Acts of Parliament, do the Dissenters think the Church of *England* expects no new Test in the room of the former, when almost all the Legislature are Members of that Church? Will not the Clergy (without any Distinction of Party) all unite in this Point? Will not the Corporations address their Members, that their Constitutions may remain upon the old Foundation, and not be new-modell'd in such a Way, as will produce perpetual Contention and Confusion, instead of that imagined Peace and Union, which they offer to make us a Present of? And will not our Representatives hearken to such reasonable Addresses? If then we are to have a *new Test*, I have never heard that the Wit of Man could invent more than these two: Either, first of all, that there be an Act of Parliament made to prohibit every Man holding any Place under the Government ever to go into a Meeting-house during the Time of their religious Worship, and habitually, at least, to frequent the Service of the Church of *England*, but not to be obliged to receive the Communion on account of any publick Office or Employment.

ment. It is said, that in *Bern*, the freest Republick now in the World, every Member of the great Council of Two Hundred is obliged *habitually* to frequent their public Devotions, or else he is expelled out of their Grand Senate: So that I hope this Part of the Scheme won't be reckoned injurious to the Liberties of the *British* Subjects.

The other Expedient is, that in case *no* religious Test of *any* kind may be admitted, there may be an Act provided to disable all Dissenters (of whatever Denomination) from voting for Members of Parliament, or being capable of being chosen themselves. This I know they will clamour loudly against, as placing them upon the same Foot with *Roman* Catholicks. It is indeed absurd to say, *their* Doctrines are as bad as the *Popish* Doctrines; but their Enmity to the Church of *England* is as *real*, their Numbers and Interests much more formidable, and consequently our Danger more *immediate*.

Utrum horum mavis, accipe.





S E V E R A L
L E T T E R S

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LETTERS

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*A LETTER from a Friend
on Occasion of the present Growth
of INFIDELITY.*

To RICHARD HOOKER, Esq;

SIR,

WHOWER recollects either the excellent Writings which have been publish'd in Defence of *Christianity*, or the weak and baffled Objections of its *Enemies*, may be at first surpriz'd, when he considers the Progress which *Infidelity* has made among us.

From this Reflection we may, however, draw this certain Conclusion. That the In-

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crease of *Deism* can *not* be ascribed to the Force of its Arguments, nor the Decay of Religion be imputed to its Want of Evidence. If therefore it be true (as there is too much Cause to complain it is) that *Unbelief* is the *fashionable* Crime of this Age, we must look out for some *external* Reasons, strong enough to account for Effects so contrary to our first Expectations, and the just Hopes that those learned Labours might have produced Fruits of another Kind.

Those who believe the Truth of our *Sacred Books*, must of course assign the Cause of Infidelity to the *Wickedness* of the Heart, and not the *Weakness* of the Head; not only because it is so assigned in *those Books*, but because it evidently follows from the very Nature of the Thing itself; for, if God intended to publish a Religion which was to be a standing Rule to all Mankind, who should not, *through their own Fault*, lose the Benefit of his gracious Designs, it follows, not only that it must be *true*, but that it must carry with it also *Evidence* sufficient to induce the Generality of *unprejudiced* Minds to accept it. Whenever therefore this Evidence has been rightly offer'd, and
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not received, we must attribute want of *Faith* to want of *Virtue*. But because this Way of Reasoning will be admitted only by *Believers*, and does not satisfy us why the fatal Contagion spreads faster and farther in these Times, than in others, it may be necessary to descend to some *Particulars*, which affect us in a *peculiar* Manner, and are the proper Causes of this prevailing Malady.

The first Thing I shall mention is, the *Reigning Luxury* of the present Age, greatly exceeding what was ever known to our Forefathers. *Wickedness* has been complain'd of, and justly complain'd of, in every Century; and some monstrous Barbarities, arising from the stupid Ignorance of the Times, or the Arbitrary Power of Military Governments, have been committed oftner formerly, than of late Years. But the bewitching Snare of *Luxury* renders Vice more frequent and extensive, and engages us in an habitual Practice of those Crimes which are most inconsistent with the Being of *Religion*. In Times of less Extravagance, Iniquity was chargeable upon particular Persons, the Sal- lies of sudden Passions, that were never intended to be long indulged. But the Vices

of Luxury proceed upon a premeditated Scheme, and seldom are corrected but by *Poverty* or *Disability*. Besides, it's giving Strength to Lust, and paving the Way for *Avarice* and *Oppression*, it spreads a *Fatal Indolence* all over the Mind, and is so unwilling to be awaken'd from its pleasing Slumbers, and hear of an Amendment, that Religion itself must be parted with rather than the darling Passion, and such Notions fondly entertain'd as will best agree with the Company they are to keep.

This dreadful Evil has operated the same Way in all Times and Places; 'twas Luxury raised the Sect of the *Sadducees* among the *Jews*; 'twas Luxury propagated the Distinction between the Civil and Political Religions of *Greece* and *Rome*, till at last, instead of only lopping off the Errors, it had almost rooted out the Belief of *Providence* and a *Future State*. I will only add, that their *Liberties* did not long outlive their *Religion*.

In this State of Things, if ever, we surely want a *Reformation*; but (which is another Cause I would assign) never was there a greater Want of *Discipline*. In the Guilty, an Uneasiness under all Restraints, a Disaffection

fection to our Constitution *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical*, and a Contempt of all Things sacred and serious; while perhaps too tender a Regard to *mistaken Liberty* makes those, who might otherwise possibly interpose, exert themselves more gently than has been ever done before in this, or in any other Nation.

In Consequence of all this, and as a new Source of our present Calamity, I would remark the *bad Taste*, the *wrong Delicacy*, and the *false Politeness*, that direct the Sentiments, and influence the Conduct of our People. This shews itself both in our *Manners*, and our *Learning*. As to the former, instead of making *right Reason* and *true Religion* the *Rule* of our Behaviour, and *Politeness* only (as it ought to be) the *Ornament* of it, we quite invert the Nature of Things: Instead of examining whether this or that Action *should* be done, we only enquire whether it *be* done, especially by People whom we weakly think *Polite*, or because they live in Places that should be so, or because they wear the external Appendages that commonly belong to Men of that Character. Then as to the *latter* 'tis equally true, both that there were never *more* Scholars, nor ever

fewer good Ones; as if Learning, by being shared among so many, had lost all its Force and Efficacy; and every body had got just so much, that no body was the better for it. Instead of applying ourselves to those good *old Authors*, who taught us *manly Sense*, and *solid Virtue*, we spend our idle Hours in reading trifling *News-Papers* and silly *Pamphlets*, stuffed with little Objections, which neither the *Author* nor their *Readers* know the Force of. Hence Men learn to *talk fluently*, when they cannot *reason justly*. Hence spring that *Self-conceit* and *Opinion* of their own Abilities, and that inveterate Hatred against those who would endeavour to set them right? It is easier, perhaps, to cure any Distemper, than to reform a Man who leads a *Party*, and is applauded in the *little Senate* over which he presides. But I would have these Gentlemen consider, that *Objecting* and *Answering* require very different Talents. The one consists in the *confused Assemblage* of Ideas, the other in the *careful Separation* of them. A little *Vivacity* and *Briskness* are sufficient for the first; but *Judgment*, *Patience* and *Attention* are necessary for the latter. So that if we commend their Prudence in chusing the *easier* Part,

Part, we must deny them the Glory of being *Genius's*, while they only busy themselves about the *weaker*. I have known many Christians, who could have appeared as very laudable *Deists*, but have met with few *Deists* that could shine on the opposite Side of the Question.

Thus far, as to what arises from among *ourselves*; but we must not forget that the *Original* and the most *Standing* Cause of Infidelity, is *Popery*, and that both with respect to their *Principles* and their *Politicks*. The *Truth* of *Miracles* has been weaken'd by *Counterfeit* ones. The *Truth* of *Testimony* by their Doctrine of *Lying* for the Service of the Church; and the Certainty of our *Sacred Records* has been question'd, to make room for their *uncertain Traditions*; as if they were resolv'd to have no Christianity at all, unless it stood upon the Foot of *Popery*. Nor do they stop here, but actually encourage the Growth of *Irreligion*. They well know, that when we are tired with the endless Mazes of *Deism*, and the infinite Uncertainty of *Natural Religion*, we shall be brought to sit down contented under Infallibility, and rather than longer bear the Miseries of having *no Religion*, shall be forced

to take up even with the *worst*. Hence *Jesuits* go masqued under the Character of *Infidels*; and they, whose *real* Fault is *Superstition*, appear as the Patrons of *Profaneness*. Look over the List of our *Infidel Authors*, and we shall soon remember *what they have been*, and *where they were bred*. Horrible as this hellish Policy is! they have more to plead for themselves than we have. They think we shall be *damn'd* for being *Hereticks*, and shall *but be damn'd* for being *Atheists*; so that they imagine they do *us* no Injury, while they greatly promote *their own Advantage*.

These Thoughts, Sir, were suggested to me upon reading the under-written *Remonstrance*, which, tho' it had been formerly publish'd, was never sufficiently dispersed, and is now almost entirely forgotten. Inserting it in your Paper will probably prevent both those Complaints for the future.

I am,

Yours, &c.

A. S.

Mr.

*Mr. John Hampden's Remonstrance against
the Errors, &c. of Father Simon.*

HAVING been in a most eminent Manner under God's afflicting Hand, I think myself obliged to examine my Conscience concerning the Causes for which it has pleased his Divine Wisdom to inflict so many signal Judgments upon me for Years last past. And I do freely confess, that, among many other heinous Sins whereof I am guilty, there is one especially which causes me great Trouble, and to which I was principally drawn by that Vanity and Desire of Vain-glory, which is so natural to the corrupted Hearts of Men. The Particular is this, That notwithstanding my Education was very pious and religious, and the Knowledge I had of the Certainty of the Truth of the Christian Religion, yet, to obtain the Reputation of Wit and Learning, which is so much esteemed in the World, I was so unhappy as to engage myself in the Sentiments and Principles of the Author of the Critical History of the Old Testament; which yet I plainly perceived
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did tend to overthrow all the Belief which Christians have of the Truth and Authority of the Holy Scriptures, under Pretence of giving great Authority to Tradition, which afterwards is easily twined and accommodated, as best suits the Interest of those who take upon them to cry it up.

I likewise acknowledge, that tho' I had but very weak Arguments to support my Libertine Opinion, such as I believe I could have easily answered, and as could not make any Impression, but upon those who are willing to cast off the Yoke of their Duty and Obligation we are all under to live in the Fear of God; yet I was so rash and foolish as to pretend I thought there was great Strength in them, when I insinuated them, rather than opened them to some of my familiar Acquaintance; and, I am afraid, I have contributed thereby to cast some of them into Opinions, and perhaps Practices contrary both to the Truth and the Commandments of the Christian Religion.

I do likewise acknowledge, that having discoursed freely with the Author of the Critical History, and having heard from his own Mouth that he allowed yet less the
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Authority of the Books of the New Testament, than those of the Old, which should naturally have obliged me to avoid all Communication with him ; yet I furnished him with Money, to execute a Design which he framed of a Critical Polyglot Bible ; which, after the Declaration he made to me, I think I ought to have consider'd as a Design which tended to destroy the Certainty of the Books of the New Testament as well as of the Old.

I believe this Project of a Polyglot Bible was innocent enough in itself, and might have been considerably useful in the Manner it was agreed on between Father *Simon*, a Friend of mine, and myself : However that may be, I cannot forgive myself, after what I knew of that Father's Opinion concerning the Authority of the Scriptures, for embarking myself with a Man who had so plainly declared his Thoughts to me in that Matter ; and so much the rather, because, upon Consideration, I see well enough how the Execution of this Design would have increased in me those loose Principles, which I have already received from the reading of his Critical History.

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This Confession I make with all possible Sincerity, and with much Grief, for having offended God by so great a Sin, for which I heartily beg Pardon of him; and I do earnestly beseech all those that may to any Degree have been seduced, either by Discourses or Examples, that they would seriously reflect upon the Danger they are in, that they may be delivered from it in time, and from such Judgments of God as he has been pleased to lay upon me.

This Confession I have written and signed with my Hand, to the End that if I shall die before I can speak with those I have perverted by my Example, they may return to themselves and to God, as I do, by solemn Protestation which I make to them, that the Opinions I have taught them were nothing but the Effects of my Pride and Vanity, which I unfeignedly condemn, designing to live and die in those contained in this Paper.

J. HAMPDEN.

Duplicates of this Paper (of which this is a Copy) were by Mr. Hampden himself transmitted to Dr. Patrick; afterwards Bishop of Ely, Dr. Kidder, and Dr. Allix.

The



*The Causes, the Success and Methods
of Modern Infidelity.*

To RICHARD HOOKER, *Esq;*

SIR,

IF one was to credit the bold Assertions, which are every Day given out in Print and Conversation, Christianity has neither Worth nor Proof on its Side, and the modern Infidels are the only Men of strong Reason and sound Sense in the Nation. But, unfortunately for them, it is a known Observation, that the loudest Pretensions are not always the best warranted: They sometimes proceed from downright Ignorance, or (what is more petulant and pragmatical) a little Knowledge: The *Fool* is sure of every thing; and the *Quack* talks with more Confidence than the Man of Science in the Profession of Physic, and fells you Health with

a Papal Infallibility : Sometimes again they proceed from a Consciousness of Defect in the Things pretended to: The *Coward* is often the Bully, and the Woman of *suspicious Character* many times affects the precise Modesty. Paying then the same Regard to these self-drawn Pictures of Unbelievers, as is due to the Sign of a Show, hung out and aggravated to invite in the gaping Populace; we must turn over their Books, where, if any where, this Strength of Reason, able to batter down the Christian Religion, is to be found. Some of these Performances, and by the most masterly Hands (if we may judge of them by the Pomp of the Editions, and the Reputation they bear with some People) I have read, and will venture to say, upon Knowledge, if you draw a Line over the declamatory Parts, the Defamation, the Calumnies, the Forgeries, the Falsehoods, and some Truths, acknowledged by Christians as well as themselves, but artfully inserted (as cunning Dealers put in some good Wares, to gloss over and vend the rest) there will not be an Argument left, that can influence a Man of Reason to quarrel with the Religion of his Country. If then these Writers quarrel with
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it on such Grounds, they must either be Men of no Reason, or their Reason must be perverted, and their Understandings darken'd, by vicious Habits. Let them chuse which they please. As a foul Stomach affects the Head with Swimmings and Disorders, in like manner a corrupt Heart clouds the Apprehension, and sets the Eye of Reason wrong, so that it cannot discern an Object, tho' placed in full Point of Vision. Inclinations, grown strong by Indulgence, press for Gratification; we easily believe what they make us wish to be true; and if we cannot bring our Vices to Reason, we endeavour to bend our Reason to them.

A good presumptive Argument of this being the real Source of modern Infidelity is, that all the eminent Learning and Vertue in the known World have been, and still are, on the religious Side of the Question, opposed by the Ignorant, the Loose, the Profligate, the Debauch'd, and the Turbulent, impatient of Religion, on account of the Restraints it lays on their Lusts and Passions.

The Time of spreading these new Doctrines helps us to form the same Judgment of their Original: An Age, when Avarice, Luxury and Wantonness have broke in upon
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on the Nation in Consequence of the *South-Sea Year*, fatal to *Property*, but much more to *Vertue*, and like a Deluge, born down all Sobriety of thinking, or acting. In such Circumstances any thing passes for Argument, that falls in with Corruption; and a Scheme is embraced without much Examination, that disarms the Deity of every Attribute disagreeable to the Sinner, and sets the World at Liberty to do what they will.

But there is no need of presumptive Arguments, when we have the Doctrines themselves to prove the Point. Is it possible any Men, unless under a lamentable Want or Perversion of Understanding, could bring themselves to assert in the Face of the World, that in the present State of Things, Reason, every Man's Reason, is of itself able to carry human Nature to its highest Perfection? That God can discover his Pleasure but once, and but one way to his Creatures, and all new Revelation is not only superfluous, but impossible? That the Relations of things are the Law of Man, and that he is able of himself to see all Things with their several Relations? That nothing can be true, which we cannot fully comprehend and measure; and God can command nothing

thing, without giving his Reason for it? That in Fact Men have no Occasion for Instruction to lead or awaken them to Duty, for Rewards to encourage, or Punishments to restrain them? That all which Heaven requires of Man is, to search his own Head and Heart for what is agreeable to himself, and that to pursue this will be Vertue and Happiness? That therefore all Laws, divine and human, except what a Man thus makes for himself, are absurd and tyrannical, and gross Impositions on the natural Liberties of Mankind?

In pursuance of this Scheme it has been publickly avow'd, that Vice is profitable and beneficial to the State, and more so than Vertue: That it would be for the Interest of the Nation to have public Stews set up in all the great Towns of it: That one Man is not made for one Woman; but that Polygamy, Concubinage, and even Sodomy, is lawful: That all Ordinances are intirely useless. Thus the Bands of Society have been loosed, and the Foundations of Government sapp'd, and Multitudes, unbridled by the Fear of God or Man, run Riot each after his darling Lust. Hence Disregard of Authority, Neglect of
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every thing serious, a Looseness, a Ferity of Manners. Hence Thefts, Fraud, Rapine, Murders, Debauchery in every Shape; Presumption, Despair, Frenzy, Madness; Self-Executions through Impatience of the Appointments of Providence, and cutting the Throats of Infants out of a Principle of Benevolence. Hence also many, grown giddy in the Mazes of Error, run into the Arms of any that will receive them, and accept of Ease from the most suspected Hand that offers it; and so Irreligion, by a natural Transition, produces Superstition and Popish Idolatry. This is the Tendency, and these the natural Consequences, and already visible Effects of the new Scheme: And can we, after this, be in any Doubt from whence it flows? These Things are known to be the Issues of a corrupt Heart. Here then we must fix the Seat of Infidelity; here it is born, cherish'd and enthron'd, and from hence casts out Firebrands, Arrows of Death, and says, Am I not in Sport?

I am sensible it will be said, Some Patrons of the modern Scheme have not discover'd in their Lives any Offence against Order and good Manners, but are as sober
and

and chaste as other People. If the Fact is true, we must seek some other Principle of Action in such; but then it cannot be a better than those abovemention'd; because Doctrines, big with such monstrous Consequences, cannot proceed from a good one, and we must judge of a Tree by its Fruits. If I remember right, it was said of one, that *Sobrius accessit ad perdendam Rempublicam*. Some Vices, less notorious than others, are yet more mischievous. Pride and Vanity can swell the Heart of Man, as well as Lust can burn it. The Love of Novelty, Ambition, Envy, Pique, Revenge, have carry'd People incredible Lengths. Some Persons will chuse to be famous on any Terms, and do Mischief, rather than nothing. If they cannot rise to great and good Actions, they will do base ones, to be talk'd of; as Fire, if it is hinder'd from getting upwards, will break out below. There stands upon Record a Man, who promis'd himself Immortality from burning a Temple, which he had not Skill to build, or Patience to behold as the Work of another. Possessed of the best Parts of the Globe, a little Mortal has

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sweated

sweated for want of Room, and wish'd for new Worlds to ravage and destroy: Nay more; a Being of real and exalted Excellence, by fondly doating on it, made himself a Devil.

Modern Infidelity then seems a motly Piece, and would make a good Grotesque Figure in the Hand of a *Dutch* Painter, who might design her by a gigantic Woman of a pregnant Womb, emitting speckled Toads, and hissing Vipers, with a prominent Stomach spotted blue, and a fungous Head puffed out to an enormous Circumference.

According to this Portrait of Infidelity, we shall be little surpriz'd, however we are griev'd, at its boasted Victories, and the Number of its Profelytes. Since it would be Matter of real Wonder, if the indolent, the luxurious, the wanton, the conceited, the seditious, the weak and corrupt Part of Mankind should not be fond of an Idol, that has something in it to court every vicious Taste. It is indeed observ'd, and justly observ'd, to the Honour of Christianity, that it carries the Marks of Truth and divine Force, because without Artifice or Violence it prevail'd and spread over the Earth

Earth in a little time, though its Precepts were irreconcilably uncomplaisant to the Practices of a debauch'd World: What then, but its incontestable Evidence, and direct Influence on the Good of Society, could make Prejudice and Depravity bow down before it, and Kings become its nursing Fathers, and Queens its nursing Mothers.

It may perhaps help to let out some of those high Thoughts, which make a Tumour in the Head of the Infidel surveying his Conquests, as a Giant in Romance the Carcasses and Bones scatter'd up and down his Castle, to acquaint him, that it requires no great Abilities, or distinguishing Talents, to do his Work. To pull down is a much less Affair than to build up; and to find Fault because one cannot reach the Beauties of a Piece, is the Mark of a little Genius. To throw Dirt, and bespatter every thing that is fair and lovely, is nothing more than Impotence and Rage. It does not require any great Strength of Head, except in the Fore-part of it, to produce Arguments, which, *Drawcanfir*-like, knock down Friends and Foes, and are as conclusive against what one maintains, as what one opposes. To harangue
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and prove a plain Thing, which all the World agrees in, for twenty Pages together, is what may be very convenient to fill the Time, and lengthen out the Writings of these Gentlemen; but is no Sign of their Elevation of Spirit, Acquaintance with their Subject, or Fairness in handling it. A like arduous Undertaking is their Practice of fighting with their own Shadows, that is, fixing Absurdities, which no Body maintains, on Religion, and then running at her with Rage and Fury for wearing them: A Treatment like to that, which Christians suffered in the Days of Persecution, when they were sewed up in the Skins of Animals, and then worry'd to Death; as if they had been the Beasts they were made to represent: This may be call'd Unluckiness, Cruelty, or whatever else you please, except Wit and Ingenuity. To dispute and wrangle, and that for ever, not only against Objects of Faith, but of Sense, every Smatterer finds in his Power. It was once a known Exercise for Men to stand forth, and undertake to speak for Hours together on any Side of a Question. It has been maintain'd there is no Motion, nor Things without

without us to move, and that there is no more Certainty of what we see, than what we believe. I cannot for my Life help mentioning here a Thought that occurs, of transporting the speculative Part of the Infidels to some remote Settlement, with a whole Volume of innocent, out of the way Questions, with which thy might be at Liberty to entertain themselves from one End of the Year to the other; and cannot but think, this Project might be of the same Benefit to the Common-wealth, as it is to the Sailors to throw out an empty Vessel for the Whale's Amusement, that he may not interrupt the Progress of the Ship. But to return: To laugh is the easiest Thing in the whole Earth; and the greater and better a Thing is, the more liable it is to undiscerning Banter. *Virgil* has been travestied, and the Heroes of the *Iliad* ludicrously personated by Frogs and Mice; but does any one, but a *Blockhead*, read those two Poems with the less Admiration on this Account? Ridicule is no Test of Truth; and to crack Jokes upon a Thing, can never prove it wants either Beauty or Evidence. The Christian Religion is, and will be, as lovely, certain

and beneficial, as if those merry Folks
had never wagg'd their Heads, loll'd
their Tongues, or shook their Sides at
her.

Yours, &c.



An



*An Enquiry into the Causes of the
Increase of Infidelity.*

TO RICHARD HOOKER, Esq.

SIR,

AS Infidelity is perhaps more propagated in private Conversation than by publick Writings, it may be worth our while to pursue it through its retir'd Recesses, and look after the Arrow which is shot by Night, as well as that which flieth by Noon-day. For though the Arguments made use of on those Occasions may possibly be the weakest, they may probably be the most effectual, as being least likely to meet with a proper Opposition.

One of the favourite Topicks, which the Infidels appear fondest of, is, *the Number of their Profelytes*. They boast already, that most Men of Sense are of their Party, and threaten us, that shortly few will stand out against them, excepting some Bigots,
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and Men of the lowest Capacity. This, they observe, cannot otherwise be accounted for, but from the general Knowledge and Learning which is now spread among the People, and which other Ages *formerly* wanted.

It might here be sufficient to remind them, that right Conclusions will never follow from false Facts, and that the most eminent and remarkable Men in all the Arts and Sciences, from the Revival of Learning at the Reformation; down to the Death of Sir *Isaac Newton*, have almost universally been strict Adherers to the Christian Faith. They may have differ'd indeed about several Parts of our Religion, but they were united in their Belief of its coming from God. This would be a sufficient Reply; and the Fact has been made out beyond Exception by an able and judicious Hand, in the Instances of several great and shining Genius's, whose Characters are too well known to be disputed *. But since the Friends of the *Deists* will not easily be per-

* See the Sentiments of Mr. *Addison*, Mr. *Locke*, &c. collected together in one Volume by the present Bishop of *London*.

persuaded, that what they alledge is *not the Cause* of their Success, unless we can point out to them what *are the real Reasons* to which it is owing, it may be proper more minutely to trace out the many concurring Circumstances that have help'd to bring forth and nurse up that Spirit of Unbelief, which does so visibly reign among us.

You have indeed attempted something of this Kind in a former *Miscellany*, and have pitch'd upon *Luxury, want of Discipline, false Politeness* and *Popery*, as four Branches which bear this corrupt Fruit. It is true, they are so ; but there are several more of the same deadly Nature, which you will give me Leave to suggest to you in the following Manner.

First then, *The impious Violation of the most solemn Oaths* (whether they were form'd as a Test for the Security of the Prince's Person, or design'd for the better executing the several Trusts to which they were annex'd, or calculated for the more faithful collecting of the publick Revenue) has not more manifestly distinguish'd this Age from the preceding, than it has evidently pav'd the Way to *Infidelity*. On the one hand, *those who have been guilty of these horrid*
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Perjuries, have been from thence harden'd and prepar'd for other Impieties, and finding themselves not quite easy, till they could wear off the awful Sense of God's avenging Providence, they have struggled hard to get rid of the Belief of that Religion, whose Precepts they were resolv'd not to practise. On the other hand, younger and unsettled Minds, who perhaps held some of these perjured Men in high Esteem, being justly scandaliz'd at their Conduct, began to think their Religion as false as its Professors, and from a justifiable Dislike of one, grew into an unreasonable Distaste of the other.

Near a-kin to this, is the wicked Behaviour of such modern *Arians*, as have subscribed those *Articles* which they believe the Reverse of: Articles not of *Peace*, (as some may be) but of *Assent*; not in Trifles, or Things of small Consequence, but of the highest Importance, and such as the Church expected to be secured by the most serious Test. All this they have broken thro', and given the common Enemy Leave to think, that whatever Zeal they shew'd against *imaginary Idolatry*, they had too little Regard for *real Honesty*. The Church and State may fairly be defended for imposing

posing proper Tests in Matters of Moment, because no Society *can* subsist without such Securities, provided they do not multiply *needless* Temptations, nor lay *unnecessary* Snares to make the People fall. Under these Restrictions every Abuse must be imputed to the Offender, who will be answerable, not only for the Crime he has committed, but also for the Scandal he has given. To argue against the Use of Sober Tests, because of the Temptations they carry with them, is to argue against the Methods of Providence, which has laid numerous Temptations in our Way. Indeed every Law, which we have strong Incitements to break, is of the same Nature with the Case before us. Our Superiors, however, should be always cautious, lest they lay more or heavier Burdens than can well be borne, and by the Frequency of its Use, bring into Contempt the most Sacred of all Obligations.

I will venture in the third Place to affirm, that not only the Conduct of the *Arian* *Subscribers*, but even *Arianism* itself, or the Revival of that Heresy, has been another Means of drawing Men off from the Belief of Christianity. I do not charge it upon
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the *Nature* of Arianism *as such*, nor can I see why the Disputes about the Divinity of Christ's *Person* should alter the Evidence for the Divinity of his *Commission*. But whether we can account for it or not, what I assert is nevertheless *Fact*. We know several, even of the *Arian* Writers, who have begun with *Herefy*, and ended in *Infidelity*. Some probable Conjectures may perhaps be offer'd, how this comes to pass. The Attempt to alter a *National* Belief in a Matter of Consequence, (as the Object of our Adoration always will be judg'd to be) is apt to stagger Multitudes, who, when they have been once unsettled, know not readily where to fix, and because they have already doubted of *one* Thing, proceed to doubt of *every* Thing. The Itch of *Novelty* incites others to make farther Advances, and gives them Hopes of being receiv'd as *Heads* of a *Party*, and gaining the same Success which they saw their former Leaders had in their Innovations. Add to this, that some of their Managers, in order to push their Adversaries the more strongly, have affected to run down all *Mysteries*, and decry all *Positive Institutions*, 'till we were left Defenceless, with mere *naked Morality*, or could
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not well understand whether we were the better for *Christianity*; which, whenever it shall be judg'd *Useless*, will soon after be reputed *False*. I must do Dr. *Clarke* the Justice to acknowledge, that he always made a Distinction between Things *above* Reason, and Things *contrary* to our Reason; and doubtless, many of their coolest Heads have observ'd the same temperate Medium. But the Generality of the Party have notoriously run greater Lengths.

Lastly, By the strong Prejudices they have conceiv'd against the *Clergy*, on account of their many Defeats and Disappointments, may have gone a great Way in disinclining them to that Religion, from the Belief of which the *Clergy* must derive all their Esteem and Support. And this leads me to consider the present Contempt of the *Clergy*, as a fourth Reason why Infidelity has of late so much prevail'd among us. Were I of Opinion that the *Clergy* had, *in all Times and Places*, been the general Pests of Society, as their Enemies love to represent them, I should think there was something so wrong in the very Nature of their Institution, that it could not proceed from a wise and good Law-giver, much less that
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the Founder of their Order should command them to be treated with Love and Respect. This, with me, would be a *speculative* Argument against the Truth of Christianity, and be a plain Indication of the Want of Foresight and Humanity in the Appointer of such perpetual Enemies to the Happiness of Mankind. That such an Order has been instituted, the Sacred History does sufficiently assure us; but that they have been the constant Sources of Calamity to their Country, no History, that I know of, has inform'd us. They are Men, and have their Faults; but then their Faults should not be magnify'd or multiply'd, or their Virtues be conceal'd, or their Merit be deny'd. However, this has been done, and we see the fatal Consequence. In Proportion, as it has been done, *Irreligion* has increas'd, and the Enemy triumph'd over the Faith and its Ministers. The *Clergy* being render'd suspected to the People, all proper Intercourses were interrupted, no Assistances were to be borrow'd from the one, no Helps to be communicated to the other. By this means the common Enemy was permitted to infuse his Poison, while no Remedy must be receiv'd from the Hand of the Physician: As
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if, because they had *at any time* been wrong, or *at any time* had too much Interest with us, therefore they could *never* be in the Right, nor ought ever to have *any* Interest with us. But do we thus use our *Lawyers* or *Physicians*? Did our Civil Governors never exceed the Limits of *their* Commission? And yet we think all these may still be treated with great Regard, though we do not intend to make ourselves blind, to shew how much Confidence we repose in them, or lose that Understanding which was only intended to be improv'd by them. The Truth of the Matter is this; Christianity can never be supported but by the Hands of its Teachers, any more than Natural Religion could stand without the Assistance of the Magistrate. They both require Teaching and Learning, as well as any other Art and Science, which is so far from being an Imputation upon either, that it is the Perfection of both; for by this Means universal Benevolence has a wider Scope, and a fairer Field of Action, and the several Dependencies of Mankind upon each other are better mix'd, and more closely interwoven! Whatever is necessary to Salvation, may, doubtless, be understood; but not

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without those Helps which our very Religion obliges us to have Recourse to. The Evil we complain of, has been gradually increasing from the Time of the Reformation. With the good Seed were some Tares at that time sown; and when we reform'd from *Idolatry*, we did not take sufficient Care to avoid *Sacrilege*. Most of the *Parochial* Churches were stripp'd so bare, that Contempt and Poverty could only be expected. But we could not stop here. We must farther oppress those whom we had before injured, and bring their Office into Disrepute, lest their Persons should be respected, and their Miseries pitied. In the mean time Religion suffers through their Sides, and the Contumely flung upon them, at last reaches their Master; and, according to his own Words, having despised those whom he has sent, we are at last come to despise him also.





*Some of the Causes of the present
Decay of Religion enumerated :
Particularly, of Party-Zeal, and
Profanation of the Sabbath. Be-
ing the Sequel to the last Letter.*

To Mr. HOOKER.

S I R,

I Have frequently observ'd how disagree-
able it is to the Taste of the present
Age, to dwell long upon the *same* Sub-
ject, however entertaining it may be in itself.
Much less will Men be persuaded to fix their
Eyes on their own Pictures, whether drawn
by a Pen or a Pencil, which, instead of
complimenting them with their Perfections,
reproaches them with the displeasing View
of their Faults. This is the most unhappy
Temper that can attend any one in the
Search after Truth, a Search which requires
great Patience, and much Attention. But
since we must fall in with the Humours and
Weaknesses of Mankind, and do them good

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in their own Way, or not at all, I will endeavour to comprise what I have farther to offer upon the Subject within a short Compass, and so give your Readers the Comfort of this Promise, That if in the probing their Wounds, the Operation be necessarily painful, it shall be no longer than the Patient's Case does absolutely require.

Without farther Preface then, I shall assign the Extravagancies of Party-Zeal, as a *fifth* Reason for the present Increase of Infidelity. I will not here mention the common Mischiefs which *always* spring from this Root, the Bribery, Profuseness, Drunkenness, Breach of Promise, and all Kinds of Immorality; nor that great Distrust of each other, and Loss of mutual Charity and Benevolence, which, if not timely prevented, will at last end in our *universal* Ruin. I will only specify two Effects of this fatal Cause, which though severely felt in their Consequences, are not enough observed in Progress. The one is, while we are so entirely taken up with promoting our *own Party*, we become careless about the Interests of *Religion in general*. Whence it is, that we see *Arians* in close Alliance with *Infidels*, and *Dissenters* supporting such as mean them

no other Favour, but, what *Polyphemus* intended *Ulysses*, to reserve them for the last Morsel? Witness the Decrease of their *Ministers* Maintenance since *Deism* gain'd Footing among them. Whence is it, that we see Men distinguish'd for their Zeal towards the *Church of England*, and their Duty to their *Prince*, too indiscriminately aiding and abetting Men, who by *Perjury* and *Rebellion* would destroy both? Comes it not from hence, that they are *less* averse to the Enemies of *Religion*, than to the Enemies of their *own Party*, and would risque the *Whole* for the sake of a *Part*? In the Intricacies and Perplexities of *Politicks* the Thing complained of cannot perhaps *always* be remedied, and to avoid the more impending Evil, must, it may be, *for a Time*, be conniv'd at. But the Misfortune is, that we are grown perfectly *unconcern'd* about the Matter, and, what might have been *permitted* as a dangerous Prescription in the Crisis of a *Distemper*, is become our *constant Food* and *usual Diet*; what malignant Influence this Conduct must have on our *common Religion*, needs no great Penetration to discover. The Enemies of our Faith must be always screen'd, often courted, often gratified with Power, which they will as

constantly employ to the Disservice of Christianity, when once they have apostatis'd from its Doctrines. Nor is it to be forgotten, that such Countenance to Men of wicked Principles naturally takes off from that Horror with which they always ought to be receiv'd by *honest Men*, till from *Friendship* with their *Persons*, we fall into a *Similitude* of *Sentiments*, and sacrifice our *old Religion*, in Compliance to our *new Allies*. The other bad Effect of this *Party-Rage* is not less pernicious, nor less evident. I mean the Influence it has in the Disposal of *Church Preferments*. That Men should, *cæteris paribus*, chuse rather to promote such as are the same Way of Thinking with themselves, is, I confess, very natural; and in Proportion, as their Sentiments appear of greater or smaller Importance, such Practice will be more or less justifiable. But to have *no Regard* to any one's Merit, to pass over his Want of *Learning*, or Want of *Morals*, to consider *chiefly* what Interest he or his Relations have in a Borough, or how acceptable his Person will be to some *great Man*; this is betraying all the several Trusts which are reposed in *Patrons* by the Laws of Christ, by the Laws of the Land, and by

by the very Nature and Design of *Patronage*. The *Apostle's* Directions are very plain and very full, that the *chief* Qualifications to be observed in the Choice of *Clergymen*, are such as relate to the great Usefulness they will be of to the People they are set over ; and if this be the standing Rule the Church is to act by, they could not by any Agreement, made in Consideration of Endowments, transfer a Right of *arbitrary* Disposals, which *they themselves* held only under *Trust*. Whatever *Patron* therefore acts only with a View to his own Interest or Humour, and does not proceed upon a Principle of serving the Cause of *Religion*, is not only false to his *Trust*, but will be accountable hereafter to God, for the Mischiefs he has thereby been the Occasion of. To *him* it will be imputed, that the People have been scandaliz'd at the Behaviour of the *Minister* ; to *him* it will be charged, that they have not been defended and guarded from those Errors and Practices which their *Pastor's* Abilities and Courage ought to have protected them from. The good and wise Archbishop *Whitgift*, who under *Queen Elizabeth* settled and finished the present Establishment, often declared, that nothing could

support any Church, or keep Religion in Countenance, but the *Learning* and *Credit* of the *Clergy*; and therefore, when he was pressed with, and thoroughly sensible of the Inconveniences which attend *Pluralities*, readily answer'd, that he should heartily fall in with the Scheme of abolishing them, provided *such a Maintenance* was first thought of, as would render them for the future *needless*. But that in the mean time he must be excused, since he knew of no Evil so great, as a *poor and unlearned Clergy*, which usually went together. Soon after the *Revolution*, great Care was taken to prefer considerable Men, and for some time we made a noble Stand against the Adversary; but whether we have never since deviated from that Path, whether the *greater Patrons* upon *Political* Regards, and the *lesser Patrons* on Views of *Avarice* and *Self-Interest*, have never departed from that *Measure*, our present Condition will speak, if I am silent. To conclude this disagreeable Topic, I would beg Leave to ask Patrons of *all* sorts, however different in their *Party Principles*, this short Question; Whether upon *Christian Notions* it be not their Duty (*especially in Times of Distress and Difficulty*) to prefer
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Men of *Learning and Integrity*, who will defend Religion by their Arguments, and adorn it by their Lives; rather than on *smaller* Considerations to commit the important Trust to Persons every way unequal to the Task? Or, in other Words, Whether they do not in a *greater* Measure *disserve* Christianity, than they *serve* their own Party; or whether that Party (supposing it to be *Christian*) will not in the *long Run* be involv'd in the *general Calamity*, and lie buried in those Ruins, it has had a Hand in pulling down upon its own Head? I will only add, that to sacrifice every serious Consideration to such *comparative Trifles*, as too frequently determine our Choice, will strongly incline Men to think that *Religion* is very little at our *Heart*, however commonly it may appear in our *Professions*; and that we can have very little real Concern for the Interests of any thing, to which we assign such uncapable and unqualified Guardians.

I will now enter upon *another* Cause of our present *Infidelity*, which is the *Propagation of the Sunday*. A Crime which is grown to a greater Magnitude than was ever remember'd, and is weekly making farther Advances. For *this* I appeal to any Man,
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that lives near *London*, and has occasion to repair to our Metropolis on a *Sunday Morning*, whether the Number of *idle Travelers*, that he meets coming out of Town, are not *at least doubled* within these *Ten Years*; and I appeal also to the Inhabitants of those Places, that lie within the Distance of *Ten Miles* from this great City, whether they think that Three in Ten, *at the most*, of such scandalous Visitors go to the respective Churches of the Places whither they repair. It has been observed by the wisest Men, that were the Celebration of this Weekly Festival totally neglected, Religion would not long survive it's Disuse. Several good Laws are still in Being to secure the due Observance of this Day, but Laws not executed are but dead Letters. Hence it is common to observe Barbers engaged in their Shops, Watermen employed on the *Thames*, and People of easier Circumstances diverting themselves abroad. Formerly few but the most profligate of the Vulgar were *openly* guilty of this crying Sin, and they perhaps offended through gross Ignorance. But since Persons of Condition have thought themselves above Instruction, and upon that Account excuse them-

themselves from attending Divine Worship, the deadly Infection is spread among the *middle Sort*, who had hitherto been kept untainted, but are now ambitious of imitating their Betters in their *Vices*, if they cannot in their *Fortunes*. One Means of propagating this impious Prophaneness, has been by flattering the Vain and the Conceited, that they can think sufficiently *for* themselves and *by* themselves, and that the only Reason of frequenting Divine Service is that Instruction which they stand in no need of; that it may be proper *now and then* to go to Church as an Example to the Vulgar, tho' the Vulgar will as reasonably think it proper *generally* to absent themselves in consequence of *their* Example. Now I must observe there are *few* to be found, who want Instruction in no Points whatever; *none* who do not want frequently to be reminded of what they know already. But *Instruction* is not the *greatest*, much less the *only* Part of our *Sunday's* Duty. Our Obligation to that arises from Reasons *equally* obliging *all* that are *Christians*. To keep Religion warm upon our Minds, by doing public Honour to God's Name, to live under a constant Sense of our Dependence

pendence on his Providence, by applying to him as the Author of all our Happiness, and praising him for the Blessings he daily bestows upon us, and to observe this Method as what God himself has prescribed for the Continuance of his Favours, *these* are Motives which must for ever engage every Christian, without Distinction. However the most pernicious and most modern Delusion that has carried off the greatest Numbers from our Churches, is the groundless Difference that has been of late set up between *Natural* and *Positive* Religion, to which *latter Class*, they say, the Observation of the *Sunday* belongs. Now, to imagine that all *positive* Religion is needless, and that the Practice of *Morality only* is necessary, is as absurd in Reason, as it is fatal in its Consequences. For, besides that the *positive* Duties of Religion have in *themselves* a *natural Tendency* to keep alive the *Moral* ones, we must consider that all Things are equally necessary that God has equally commanded, that the Grace of God will be best conveyed in the Channel he himself has cut out, and his Favours bestowed in the Manner he has appointed for their Conveyance; to observe therefore his Ordinances,

nances, is itself *real Religion* and *true Morality*: For, the Compliance with any Ordinance, implies *Obedience* to the Ordainer, and *Obedience* to our Maker is, in the highest Sense, *Morality*; so that to shake off the Obligation of *positive Religion*, is *covertly* to renounce the Authority of *Revelation*. In short, all Duty, strictly speaking, is *moral Duty*, and the Distinction of *positive* and *moral Duties* does not properly signify any Difference in the *Obligation*, but the *different Way* of our coming to the Knowledge of it; in the *one* Case, by the apparent Nature and Fitness of Things; in the *other*, by an external Declaration of God's Will. If any one would be farther acquainted with the *Family-Mischiefs*, the *Domestick Evils*, which attend the Profanation of the *Sunday*, let him consult a Reformation Sermon, not long since published by the learned Bishop of *Chichester*.

You will receive, Sir, some farther Considerations on this important Affair, from

Your most humble Servant,

A. S.



*Upon Mr. Chubb, concerning the
Historical Parts of the Old Testa-
ment.*

S I R,

THERE has lately been published a Book, entitled, *Some Observations offered to the public Consideration, occasioned by the Opposition made to Dr. Rundel's Election to the See of Gloucester, in which the Credit of the History of the Old Testament is particularly concerned.* By Thomas Chubb. Whatever Opinion the Author may entertain of *other Prophecies*, his own *Prediction* concerning himself is certainly verify'd; for, as he foresaw (p. 12. of the Preface) that he might possibly be deem'd and represented as a *Sceptic, and Unbeliever, and as an Enemy to the Christian Religion*, so it is come to pass; and how justly, will appear before I conclude
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this Letter. The Intention of this *Considerer* is to subvert the Credit of the Historical Parts of the Old Testament, and the private Opinions (as he calls them) of the Writers of the New; and the Use he proposes to make of this bold Attempt, is thereby to justify Dr. Rundle's Pretensions to a *Bishopric*. I have for some time waited in Expectation that Dr. Rundle would do himself Justice, and wipe off *so foul an Implication*, as this scandalous Apology for him suggests to Mens Minds. For my own Part, I would no more suffer myself to be *thus* defended, than I would recommend the *Life of Homer*, or offer Mr. Foster Preferment, in order to shew my Attachment to the Christian Religion, or my Love for the Church of *England*. But the good Doctor, it seems, long used to lie under *cruel Aspersions*, neither cares to vindicate his own *Innocence*, nor give the World that *Satisfaction*, which from his *public Character* the World think they have a right to demand. But however easy the Doctor may be with his old Acquaintance Mr. Chubb, I will never sit still to see *Christians Birthright*, the *Protestants Bible* called in Question and calumniated, without *exposing*
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in full View the *Malice* and *Wickedness* of that Writer, who dares deny the Inspiration of the *Holy Writings*, while with most *solemn Impudence* he professes himself a *Christian*. The Design of the *Apostate Priest*, mentioned in a former *Miscellany*, and of this *Apostate Layman* is exactly the same, *viz.* to insist that some Parts of the *Scriptures* are *inspired*, and some not *inspired*, without laying down a Rule to distinguish the one from the other, and so, by setting the *Parts* at Variance, to render the *Whole* useless. But in the Execution of their Design the two worthy Allies do indeed differ. The Letter-writer acts with more Art, and behaves with more Decency: Whilst this Fellow, according to the Lowness of his Education, not only *murders*, but *butchers* the Reputation of the sacred Penmen, and brings in a Bill of *Exceptions* against the Administrations of the *Holy Spirit*, as if he would *saucily* try him before an human Judicature. Before I apply myself to make such Extracts, as shall abundantly justify the Severity of my Censure, I cannot but observe, how natural a Transition there is in Fact from *Arianism* to *Deism*, tho' I must own I see not any *necessary* Connexion.

Possibly

Possibly finding that the Scriptures too much favour the Catholic Doctrines, they grow out of Love with them for supporting Opinions, which their *weak Reason* is determined ever to reject. But true it is that many *Arians* have turned *Infidels*. Even this poor Man, *the Considerer*, began at first with reducing the Second and Third Persons of the Ever-blessed Trinity down to the Rank and Order of Creatures, and now we see he has learned to treat them like Creatures of his own Making. That I have not charged him without sufficient Grounds, will appear from the Contrast between the two following Columns:

1 Sam. xv. 2, 3.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the Way when he came up from Egypt. Now, go, and smite Amalek, &c.

Chubb, p. 23, 24.

Here we see was a most barbarous and bloody Massacre intended.---In this Branch of History there is one Circumstance which I EXCEPT against, viz. that the afore-said Sentence was to be executed by the Order of God.---

N

This

This exceeds the Bounds of Credit due to *any* History, and therefore in Reason and Equity every Man has a Right to *doubt of, or disbelieve it.*

Exodus xvii. 14--16.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a Memorial in a Book, and rehearse it in the Ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the Remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven, &c.

Chubb, p. 26.

That this was the Declaration of God I EXCEPT against, as exceeding the Bounds of all Rational Belief.

2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2.

Then there was a Famine in the Days of David,---and David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered, It is for Saul.

Chubb, p. 27--29.

Here the Answer of God to David's Inquiry, I EXCEPT against, as incredible. ---The State of the Case before mentioned

Saul and for his bloody
House, because they
slew the Gibeonites;
&c.

ed seems rather to be
this; *David* had dis-
placed the House of
Saul, and in order
the better to secure
the Government in
his own Family, he
took care to get rid
of as many of *Saul's*
Family as he could,
to which the fore-
mentioned *Pretended*
Answer of God was
a very plausible Pre-
text.

2 Sam. xii. 14.

Because by this
Deed thou hast given
great Occasion to the
Enemies of the Lord
to blaspheme, the Child
also that is born unto
thee shall surely die.

Chubb, p. 65.

Though, by the
Way, God's taking
away the Life of an
innocent Child to
shew his Dislike of
one of *David's*
Faults; and his de-
stroying Seventy
Thousand Men to
shew his Dislike of
another; the Credit
of

2 Sam. xxiv. 15.

*So the Lord sent a
Pestilence upon Israel,
&c.*

St. James v. 17.

*Elias was a Man
subject to like Passions
as we are, and He
pray'd, &c.*

of these Branches of
History, I think may
very justly be dispu-
ted.

Ckubb, p. 41, 42.

The Apostles were
bred *Jews*, and, as
such, might be very
much prejudiced in
Favour of the Histo-
ry of the Old Testa-
ment, and therefore
may reasonably be
supposed to carry
their Opinion *higher*
than was either *fit* or
right.—St. *James*
paid a greater Re-
gard to the Credit of
such History, than
the Reason of the
Thing will admit:
—And, if St. *James*
did, then *he* or *any*
other Apostle might
do the same with re-
spect to the History
of

of the *Old Testament*, by *absolutely* relying upon it, as a proper Ground of Credit for every individual Fact or Circumstance related in it.

No Wonder, after this, if Mr. *Chubb* admits of no *Divine Historians*, not even *Moses* himself, but places their Works in the same Rank with other Histories, and seems to compare them not only with Lord *Clarendon* and *Echard*, but even with *Oldmixon* himself, p. 15. adding p. 16. that the more ancient the History is, the less is it to be depended upon. As to *Abraham*, tho' he makes the largest Figure in the Title Page, he seems rather intended to introduce the rest, than to tire us with an *old* Dispute, in which Mr. *Chubb* is so far from being *Master of the Argument*, that to this Day he does not understand the very *State of the Question*. However, p. 31. he seems to complain, that he had hitherto treated the Patriarch too *Modestly*, and offers one Observation to the Judgment of his Readers, whether it affects the *Credit* of that Story,

or not. I think there is nothing more which is remarkable, except his informing *God Almighty*, that in case he intended to take away *Isaac's* Life, it was much fitter that he should do it himself, than that he should require *Abraham* to do it. The *Considerer* deceives himself throughout, by dwelling for ever upon a Proposition which is true, but nothing to his Purpose. He says no Evidence can *prove* a Thing or Fact to which it does not stand *related*. Wonderful indeed! are we to fetch that Piece of Knowledge only from *Salisbury*? But what then will follow? Why the Evidences, which prove Christ's Mission, will not prove that the *Jews* passed through the Red Sea on *Dry-Land*, as he cunningly puts it off in *Italic* Characters. Now herein the poor Man is much mistaken, and all this for not distinguishing between a *direct* and a *consequential Relation*. The Evidences which prove Christ's Mission, prove that all his *Preaching* and all his *Promises* were to be entirely received and depended on. Now *He* himself appeals to *Moses's* Writings as *decisive* and of *divine Authority*, and the Apostles, led into all Truth by the Spirit, according to our Saviour's Promise, treat them always
with

with the same religious Respect, and by Consequence, the Arguments which prove the Truth of Christianity do sufficiently ascertain the Authority of *Moses*. Had Mr. *Chubb* dealt in little Criticisms upon *Names*, *Places*, or *Numerals*, he might have enjoy'd for me the Satisfaction of his own Sufficiency, but when he goes to the *Law* and to the *Testimony*, in order to overthrow their Authority, it is fit he should not pass *unrebuked*. I shall conclude with professing myself amazed that Dr *Rundle*, under his *Circumstances*, should suffer himself to be thus defended by such an *Apologist*, and not enter his Protest against it.

I am, S I R,

Yours,

A. S.

Query, Whether Mr. *Chubb* does not expect the offer of an *Irish* Preferment, as well as Mr. *Foster*?

N 4

Upon



Upon MIRACLES.

S I R,

HOWEVER artfully and covertly the Enemies of Christianity carried on their Attacks for some time against it ; however we were lull'd asleep, while they were vigorously pushing on their great Work, or were banter'd as Men that disquieted ourselves and others with imaginary Dangers, lest we should early have united in a common Opposition to their Favourite Design. They now own their Success with Triumph, lay the Masque quite aside, and laugh at us for not sooner perceiving what was before no small Crime in us even to suspect. The melancholy Situation we are in, is no longer the Dream of some *bigotted* Clergy, who look'd on all as gone, if there was but the least Deviation from the ancient Opinions, but is seen and felt by all. Mr. *Foster* himself, who is thought to be free from any Affectation of aggravating Things of this Nature, owns that *it is most Evident that Infidelity never*
more

more abounded than in this Age of Free-inquiry, and declares that *embracing the Principle of Liberty* (or Free-thinking) *has ended with many in Infidelity, or a Disbelief of all Religion.* Tho' these Considerations may greatly affect us, they should not lead us to Despair, but rather quicken our Resolutions to make Head against an Enemy that is already grown so formidable. You cannot always, Mr. *Hooker*, dwell upon the same Topic, and a great many different Incidents will determine your Subject. But let us keep the Grand Point always in View; and especially upon the *Solemn Seasons of the Year* it may not only be proper but expected that your Readers should be entertain'd with Reflections on the Truth and Evidence of the Christian Faith. I shall contribute my Share towards this good Work by addressing two Letters to you, in the former of which I shall endeavour in the briefest Manner to refute Mr. *Collins's* Argument against Christianity as it is laid down in *his Grounds and Reasons*, &c. and establish our Religion upon *his own Concessions*. And this I the more readily engage in, because I am informed his Reasonings, weak as they are, have operated on the Understandings of some

- some Gentlemen, that were not supposed to have wanted either Sense or Learning. In the other I shall consider a common Objection which may be more (at least more directly) apt to work on Persons of meaner Capacities, *viz. That Religion cannot much concern them, because the Proofs of it lie too far above their Apprehensions.*

The Force of Mr. Collins's Reasoning, if I mistake it not, is this, 'Tis necessary to arrive at Christianity by the way of Judaism. Our Faith *must* be proved first by *Prophecies* and not by *Miracles*. But Prophecies do not prove it (says he) in their *literal* Sense, and a Metaphorical Sense is no Argumentative one, therefore they do not prove it at all. Christianity then, which was *intended* to be proved by Prophecies, but is not *so* proved, must be False, and if it be False, Miracles come in too late to its Assistance, since all the Miracles in the World, can never prove that to be true, which is in itself really False. Now, tho' we do not by any means admit his Doctrine of Prophecies, we will for once take him at his Word, Reason with him on *his own Concessions*, and try if we cannot turn his own Artillery against himself. Mr. Collins's *Concession* is,
that

that a plain and full Miracle ought to be regarded (supposing its Reality) did it come *alone*, and not appeal to Prophecies, which he thought clogg'd and ineumber'd it, and sunk it by that Assistance which was call'd in to support it. Let us see then how the Fact stands, and if it shall appear that the Church of Christ was at first *actually* gather'd among the *Jews* by an Appeal to Miracles, and that the Church among the Gentiles could *possibly* be form'd no other way, it must be allow'd that a proper Method was taken upon his own Principles, That the first Churches of the *Jews* came into our Saviour upon this Footing, is not only plain from their own Confessions recorded in the New Testament, but from this Consideration also, that the *chief* Prophecies, which foretold the Messiah, neither did nor could take Place *till his Death*, in the Way of plain and regular Proof.

The common Argument, used by the Apostles, *even to the Jews*, was drawn from the miraculous Resurrection of our Saviour. St. Paul calls it the *sure Foundation of God*. If the Christians of that Age were under any Doubts or Difficulties, he bids them remember that *Jesus Christ was raised from*

from the Dead, and in another Place he speaks of the *Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead*, by which he was declared to be the Son of God or the Messiah; with Power according to the Spirit of Holiness, by whom he was justified in all his Claims which he made before his Death. You see, Sir, what Stress is laid upon this Miracle even above several others; for tho' every real Miracle be equally a Proof of God's Verification of that Doctrine for the Truth of which he is in so solemn a Manner appealed to, yet relatively, or to our Conceptions, that Miracle must carry the greatest Weight with it, and be most convincing, which seems above all others to require the Exercise of the greatest Power, the most direct Interposition of Providence, and to be least liable to be mistaken, counterfeited, or misrepresented. The Fact alledged was a plain naked Fact, very capable of being made out, if true. His Disciples saw him dead, and yet several Hundreds of them, those especially who were his most intimate Acquaintance before his Death, and best knew him, conversed with him in a most familiar Manner for several Weeks after his Resurrection. To this they constantly bore their

their Testimony, and at last sealed it with their Blood. Now tho' many Men have been found that would *die for an Error*, 'tis too contrary to human Nature to suppose any Man, much less so many, would *die for a Lie*. Thus we see how *constantly*, and with what Success the Miracle of the Resurrection was urged in Behalf of Christianity to the *Jews*, who were acquainted with the Fact, or satisfied with the Characters of those who attested it, and how compleat its Evidence became by the Death of the Attesters. Hence it was that the Apostles themselves were at first forced to work other Miracles for the Proof of the Resurrection, because at that Time it wanted the Seal of their Blood. But now it stands in need of no additional Support, but rests upon its own Bottom and Foundation. At the Beginning of Christianity, when that Religion was to be *quickly* spread throughout the World, 'twas necessary that there should be a *Multiplicity* of Miracles, because the Way of Evidence from Testimony, though very sure, was long and tedious. But now we have Time and Leisure to examine into it, we find this Miracle has all the Evidence that any Miracle can have, and to imagine that in its own Nature it wants another

another to confirm it, is saying what will with equal Justice be applied to all Miracles *in infinitum*. But perhaps Mr. Collins's Friend will say that it is probable the *Jews* were more convinced by reading and considering the Old Testament, though much greater Notice was taken of Miracles in the New. Let us travel then out of *Judea*, and see how the Case must *necessarily* stand while Christianity was propagating among the Gentiles.

As the Apostles travelled over all the Earth in order to convert Mankind, when they came into distant *Countries* unacquainted with the Language, Religion, and Expectations of the *Jews*, they neither *did* nor *could* appeal to *Jewish* Prophecies, in order to confirm the Miracles they either *work'd* or *attested*, but asserted the Truth of their Doctrines by an Appeal to Heaven for their Veracity (in some Measure after the Nature of an Oath, as *that* calls upon God to decide dubious Matters among Men) who either had or did interpose upon their Appeal, and by that Means justified their Assertions; for, tho' the working of a Miracle doth immediately shew nothing but God's Power, yet the working it upon an Appeal
does

does as necessarily ratify and confirm the Point in Question, as we must suppose him to be wise, just and Good. The Doctrines then preached to the distant Heathens, were proved by Miracles *alone*, and Miracles, when *alone*, are allowed to be sufficient Evidence, our Enemies themselves being Judges.

The Doctrines, which those Miracles proved, were chiefly that *Jesus* was the Messiah or Christ, that he was sent by God to reveal his Will to Mankind, and afterwards appointed to be the Judge of the Quick and Dead in the next World. Now if these Positions were true in the remotest Parts of the World, because attested by Miracles *alone*, they must be equally true every where, since Truth is not *local*, nor can change its Nature by changing of the Climate. If it was every where therefore true that *Jesus* was the Messiah, it must be true in *Judea* also, or among the *Jews*; nor could any uncertain Application of the Prophecies, or supposed Deficiencies in them, render those Assertions false, which had before been demonstrated to be true, any more than Miracles can prove that to be true which is in it self really false. The Obscurity of the Old

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Hebrew,

Hebrew, our scanty Knowledge in the History and Chronology of those Times, and possibly sometimes the Inaccuracy of the Transcriber, may make it difficult to see the full Force and strict Conclusiveness of some Passages; but whatever be the Occasion, or how difficult soever it may be to account for all Objections, yet here we may safely rest, and securely hold that the Allegations may be indeed *Difficulties*, but cannot be contrary *Proofs*, since no one Proof can ever contradict another. This is deemed just Reasoning in Mathematicks and Philosophy, and would be esteemed as such in Divinity, if we were equally devoid of Prejudice and Affections. Grant me then the Resurrection of our Saviour, or any other such great Miracle, and you grant me all. From hence 'twill follow that he came from God, and that *what* he deliver'd in his Name was true: Among other Things, that the Old Testament was true, because *He* admitted it as *such*; and that he was prophesied of in those sacred Writings, though we should not be able to specify the particular Places, nor plainly understand them when specified. I say not this, as if there were no Prophecies that plainly pointed at the

Messiah, but in order to pursue the Course of my Reasoning, which led me first to shew the Force of our Arguments against the *Infidels*, even upon their own Positions; and secondly, to shew that the best and strongest Arguments in Behalf of our Religion, are such as are not involved in dark Learning, and uncertain and difficult Reasonings, but such as honest Men of common Capacities, and the usual Assistances which God had supplied them with, may make themselves sufficient Masters of. If they will indeed refuse such Helps as the Christian Religion has provided for them, and receive no Assistance in Preaching or Conversation from a Priest, because some Priests have abused their Credulity, they must answer their indistinguishing Indiscretions at their own Peril, and not blame God for denying them those Benefits which he has *actually* granted them.

I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

H. S.

O



The Subject continued.

S I R,

IN my last I endeavoured to shew that Miracles were deemed *sufficient* Evidence, when they were the *alone* Evidence for the Christian Faith, by Mr. *Collins's* own Confession ; and then observed that Miracles *alone* were *frequently* made use of to prove the Christian Religion, which, when once *so* proved, could never afterwards be *possibly* disproved by any Difficulties that could be started against it. So that a Christian might reasonably fix his Foot here, and, whenever he was attacked by any puzzling Objection, might justly reply that he did not perhaps pretend to give a satisfactory Solution to it ; but whatever it proved, he was sure it could not prove that to be *false*, which had been already proved to be *true*.

Before I go on to examine the other Objection mention'd in my former Letter, I have since consider'd that it may be proper to say something of *Prophecies*, that, though they came not within the Bounds of the preceding

preceding Debate, you may be convinced I have an high Regard for *them also*.

To speak *accurately* of this Matter, tho' every Miracle be not a Prophecy, yet every Prophecy is so far a Miracle, as they serve in common the same End and Purpose, and proceed in the same extraordinary Manner of Operation above the Rules of Causes and Effects, or what we usually call the Course of Nature, and argue the immediate Interposition of God himself. As to the main Point then, Prophecies may properly enough be looked on as a different Species of Miracles; so that for any Man *grossly* to assert (as a late Infidel Writer has done) that Prophecies are a better Proof of our Faith than Miracles, is to maintain that Miracles are a better Proof than Miracles; whereas all that can possibly in this Case be true, is, that *some* Miracles are more convincing than *others*. However, though both these sorts of Evidence agree thus far, yet they have their Differences also, both as they refer to, and manifest forth, different Perfections in the Divine Nature, and as they are respectively fitter for some religious Uses in God's Government of the World. Miracles more immediately demonstrate his Omnipotence

or great Power; Prophecies establish the Belief of his Prescience and Veracity.

Miracles are more adapted to command a *quick* Submission and *speedy* Compliance from Mankind. Prophecies are more proper to keep up a *general* Expectation, and by letting us *gradually* into the Nature as well as Existence of the Thing or Person prophesied of, to prepare us for the *more* easy Reception of what is to come among us. The Scripture Prophecies may be reduced under three Classes. First, Those great and eminent Prophecies which do *clearly* and *solely* refer to Christ and his Kingdom, and these, as they are more important in their Consequence, so they are fewer in Number. Secondly, a *Multiplicity* of Prophecies, of inferior Evidence taken *singly*, but which, when brought together, do with their *united Force* so minutely describe the Character, Condition and Circumstance of the Person foretold, as must in some Instance or other *necessarily* baffle the Design of any Impostor. So that though we should allow *no one* of the predicted Marks being found upon any Person, would certify us that he was the Messiah; (they being most of them, at least, fitter to point out who was *not* the Christ, than who *was*) yet if we consider how highly

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ly improbable it is that so many Particulars should be specified, and yet *all concenter* in the Person of *Jesus of Nazareth*, we must grant it to be a strong Argument to shew that he was the Son of God. The third Rank of Prophecies is of such as have *other Ends in View* besides the foretelling of an Event that shall happen, or an eminent Person that shall arise; such, wherein the Prophet does not intend to pitch upon any Facts, which by their Event could prove the *Truth* of his Prediction, but only to set forth the Dignity and Quality of the Messiah's Person, and declare the great End of his coming into the World; in short, to signify unto us, not who was to be the Messiah, but what sort of Person the Messiah was to be. The Confusion occasion'd by not attending to this *Triple Partition*, has produc'd an infinite deal of inconclusive Reasonings. I will only add that all *accommodated* Prophecies, all Prophecies capable of a *double Sense or Application throughout*, as well as all Types, Ceremonies, Rights and Allegories cannot be, strictly speaking, *Argumentative*, but chiefly serve the same Purposes with the last Class.

Forgive me, Mr. *Hooker*, this long Introduction, and I will directly apply myself to

consider the Objection before-mentioned, *viz.* That Religion cannot much concern the Generality of Mankind, because *the Proofs of it lie too far above their Apprehensions.* The Effect of this Objection upon *unthinking* People may only be to make them be more and more indolent and lazy, but with *others* it reaches much farther, for, if the Christian Religion was proposed to Mankind in general, and yet does not bring Evidence suitable to work upon the Generality of Men, the Conclusion, I doubt, will not be long able to be warded off.

It can never be our Duty (say the *Infidels*) to believe a Religion which requires any Measure of Thought and Application for us to be convinced of. Nothing is necessary, say they, but what is clear and easy to be apprehended; and if therefore we believe no Doctrine in Scripture but what may without Difficulty be apprehended, much less should we believe the Scriptures themselves as necessary to be received by Mankind, if the Proofs of their Truth are not very plain and obvious. To which I answer, that, as we ought not to reject a Doctrine, as requiring too much Pains to understand it, which does not require more than the Foundation on which it stands;

stands; so neither can we justly reject that Foundation, or disbelieve Christianity, as not obvious to our Apprehensions, when the Proofs of it are as clear, as the Proofs of several of the Parts of Natural Religion, or whatever else Men will own for the Rule of their Conduct and Proceeding, whether it be their Principles of Honour, or what they call the present Interest of Society; for that Argument, which bears hard upon all Schemes in general, one of which must still be accepted, can conclude against none in particular. 'Tis our Duty to inform ourselves in what Cases 'tis lawful to take away a Man's Life, and in what not, and so throughout the several Laws of Nature. 'Tis our Duty to consider what is the Interest of ourselves, our Families, and the Societies in which we live. And he, that will own all this to be our Duty, notwithstanding its Difficulty, can bring no Objection against any Religion that I should be desirous of defending. Nothing certainly can be necessary, which 'tis not possible for us even with a reasonable Measure of Application to attain to; but to say that nothing is necessary, but what is obvious and easy, is directly contrary to the very Design for which God

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sent us into this World, which was to employ our Faculties in finding out and doing his Will. As to Ideots and Men of a Rank not much superiour to them, the same may be said for their not understanding the Truth of a Revelation, as for their Ignorance in natural Duties, and doubtless where God has given little, there little will be required; but Men of common Sense may as well apprehend *that* as *these*. I do not say they may as easily answer all the Objections, or so immediately see through all the Difficulties with which ingenious Men may endeavour to perplex them, either in this or any other Case. All that I contend for is, that the Generality of Mankind, would they use such an Attention *here*, as they are seen to employ in some *other* Affairs, in the Trade and Business of civil Life, would so far apprehend the Reasonableness of what is offer'd in Defence of Christianity, as to acquiesce in the Belief of it with such a Satisfaction, as they are wont to receive in other Matters. To apply this now to the Case in Hand, granting me only the three following reasonable Preliminaries. *First*, That there be a sufficient Body of proper Teachers to instruct Men in the Truth of their Religion, for this

is

is part of the Christian Scheme, and such a Body surely may be had in every Nation. Secondly, That the Generality of Mankind are not obliged (like Scholars) to comprehend all the Evidences in their *fullest Light*, but that is sufficient for such to perceive that it is *most probable* that the Christian Religion came from God; for every one is bound to close in with what there is but *even a Probability*, that God expects from us. Thirdly, That it is not essential to the Compleatness of their Christianity, that they should be able to answer Objections, solve Difficulties, or defend their Faith against learned Opposers; but barely that they should be able to apprehend the Force of some *positive Arguments* in Favour of their Religion. Under these Circumstances, let us see whether Christianity be above the Level of the Generality of Mankind. Now if the direct Proofs of it consist of Propositions very few in Number, and those capable of being well explain'd, we gain our Point. Give me leave then, Mr. *Hooker*, to have Recourse to my former Letter; and as I there shewed the *Conclusiveness* of the Proof from Miracles *alone*, I shall here attempt to shew the *obvious Easiness* of the

same Argument, and by Consequence how fit it is to influence Mankind in general.

Whatever Darknes has been cast either by Philosophers or Divines over the Doctrine of Miracles, I will venture to affirm (at least, as far as Christianity can be thereby affected) that there is very little real Difficulty in the Dispute. Every common Man is as good a Judge of the Fact as the finest Genius. Tho' perhaps *no one* can assign the Limits of *Natural Powers*, or say how far they go, and where they end, yet we shall *all* without Hesitation, agree in this, that to raise the *Dead*, or *speak all Languages without having learn'd them*, is beyond the Laws of *Matter and Motion*. Whether a Miracle can be work'd by God alone, or by any other Spirit inferior to the Deity, is a vain Inquiry; since whatever Power may be deem'd requisite to produce so stupendous an Effect, no Power can be allow'd to interpose in the Management of human Affairs, which are under the Government of God, so as to deceive his Subjects, since that would make it impossible for him ever to communicate himself to Mankind by taking away all Discriminations between false and real Revelations; for which Reason 'tis certain

tain God will never suffer *such a Confusion*. Nor is it to our present Purpose to examine whether God, for the Trial of our Faith and Integrity, will ever permit the Seal of Miracles to be used in behalf of a false Doctrine, since if the Affirmative be granted, 'tis only when we have been guarded beforehand from running into the Error by a previous Revelation, giving us warning of what should happen, or by some plain Absurdity in the Doctrine itself, sufficient to convince us that it *did* not, because it *could* not, come from God. But neither of those Cases can be alledged here. The Doctrine is allow'd to be the compleatest System of Morality that was ever publish'd; nor did we ever receive any Præmonition to reject it. So far then we stand clear of *all Learned Disputes*. Let us go on and we shall find that any Man of *common Sense and Attention* must be also a good Judge of the *Reality* of those Miracles we quote, and that the Workers of them could neither be Enthusiasts or Knaves. For Instance, the Power of *Speaking all Languages and communicating that Gift* to others, was a Miracle which neither the Parties concern'd nor the By-standers could possibly be deceived in, Neither *Zeal* nor *Enthusiasm* would

would mislead them into any Mistake. The Speaker must know whether he had learnt (were that possible) all Languages, and the Auditors will judge whether he can speak them. *Spinoza* looks upon the *Apostles* as well-meaning honest Men, but carried away with the Superstition of that time. But surely no Superstition can ever persuade me that I have *not* learnt what I *have* learnt, and that I came by this Faculty to Day when I have been acquiring it by strong Application during the greatest part of my Life. *Spinoza* then is too good-natur'd, and the *Apostles* must have been dishonest Men, if there was any Mistake in this Case. But there could be no Mistake, because the Thing itself was not *practicable*, if intended, and not *intended*, because they died to prove their Sincerity: The highest Evidence that human Nature can give! Hitherto then an honest Man of common Sense with such Helps as easily might be had could judge for himself; for the whole Matter is only about the Reality of plain Facts, which as plainly exceeded the Power of Nature, and must therefore evidently come from him who is above Nature: But we (say the Deists) don't live in the Age when those Things are said to have happen'd.

happen'd. For the Proof of which *we* can only have History and Tradition: Here then the *Generality* of the World must be at a Loss, however clear the Thing may appear to Men of Skill in Languages, History and Antiquities. By no means; for it may be shewn that nothing in all Antiquity, can boast the same Certainty and Plainness of Tradition. Not to mention the *undoubted Records* that from that very Age down to this Time have preserv'd the Memory of those Miracles, that were *immediately* read in *all* public Assemblies, translated into *all* Languages, quoted by *all* Authors, and dispersed into all Countries, and so incapable of being either forg'd or tamper'd with as the *Records* of any particular Nation entirely under the Power of the Government may in Whole or in Part be serv'd; not to insist on these Things, the Tradition has been kept up in every Age among People unallied in Language, Interest, Commerce, or Political Power, by certain Facts (I mean Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Priesthood) founded upon the Supposal of the Truth of this History, and no otherwise to be accounted for and instituted as Memorials of the main Things which we contend for in Christianity.

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These Memorials, with the Instructions which have been *perpetually* and *uniformly* given to all Christians, contain a clear Evidence of our Tradition level to the Capacities of all sober Inquirers. 'Tis remarkable then, that in order to prove the Christian Religion, you need only prove the Truth of three Propositions, the one a Point of Doctrine, the other of *Fact*, and the Third of *Tradition*, viz. *First*, That Miracles, when admitted to be real, *do* confirm the Doctrine in whose behalf they were work'd. *Secondly*, That the *Reality* of the Scripture Miracles may be demonstrated from the very Nature of them. *Thirdly*, That the Account of them is handed down to us in the most unexceptionable and unsuspected Manner, ingrafted on, and mixing itself with, all the Monuments of Learned, Civil and Religious Concern. To fix the scatter'd Parts of this Discourse deeper in the Reader's Mind, I will sum it up with giving a Definition of a *Religious* Miracle. *A Religious Miracle, then, is an Answer from God by altering the Course of Nature, when He is adjur'd or appeal'd to in order to certify the Truth of any Proposition, in itself Credible, but of itself Dubious.*

I have now, Mr. *Hooker*, done with the Objection I took upon me to refute; and I hope you have seen how little their famous Maxim, viz. *quæ supra nos, nihil ad nos*, will be able to justify a Disregard to Christianity. I will subjoin a few Remarks on a Position laid down in Dr. *Butler's Analogy*, &c. and so conclude. No body seems to have thought more, or more deeply on the Dealings of God with Mankind than that Judicious Author, and his elaborate Piece deserves the Thanks of all Christians; but he will not take it amiss, if, in a Quarto Book containing 320 Pages, he may be thought to be guilty of *some few* Mistakes. I have in the foregoing Discourse asserted, that it is sufficient for us to embrace Christianity even upon *probable* Evidence, such as will upon the whole, be at least somewhat more than what is said against it. The Doctor runs this Matter much further, and seems to maintain that if the Question remain'd *equally doubtful*, the Religious Side ought still to be embraced. I own this Opinion at first Sight carries with it a *pious* Appearance, and was, if I remember right, formerly supported by Archbishop *Tillotson*; but I am afraid, if thoroughly pursued in
its

its Consequences, it will leave us *no Religion at All, properly so call'd*, or, at least, create in the Minds of most Men a great *Indolence and Unconcernedness* about it, instead of stirring them up to be *able to give a Reason for the hope that is in them*.

'Tis hard to prove that 'twill be sufficient to engage any one to be of the Side of Religion, if it be but *barely possible* that it *may be true*, tho' there should be no *preponderating Probability* of either side; because when the Question is brought to be examined, it will appear *that cannot be Religion* which has not a *greater Probability* in its Favour. Religion is a relative Term, and signifies some Power to *oblige* us; but where the Scales are *equal*, neither can possibly claim *Preference*. If it be still said that the Preference lies in this, that 'tis safer to be of the side of Religion, it will easily be replied, that it is taking the Thing for *granted*, which wants to be *proved*, for nothing will be admitted to be *Religion*, but what has some *superior Reason* on its side; since Religion consists in *believing* what we think God expects us to *believe*, and *doing* what we think he expects us to *do*; but when the Appearances are on both sides *equal*, there
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the Mind is no more able to think God expects *any thing*, than a Body at rest can be moved by two equal contrary impulsive Forces. Besides, while we consider God as a *Governour*, we know that we are only liable to Punishment for a Breach of his *Laws*; but nothing can be deem'd a *Law* which has not been *promulgated*, and the Promulgation of God's Laws consists in the *superior* Evidence and Reason which we have to prove they come from him; that is, in other Words, to say, in the Evidence and Reason we have for them; for a Reason that is *not Superior* to every thing against it, is upon the whole *no Reason at all*. Besides that, it is inconsistent with the Idea of God, to make our Well-being depend on *meer* Uncertainties, *equal* Possibilities, and *groundless* Conjectures. Whatever therefore is of this kind, may possibly be any thing else, but I think it cannot be *Religion*. The *Doctor* observes that even a *doubtful* Scale has some *positive* Weight in it. It is true, *absolutely* speaking, it has; but *relatively*, or compared to the other *equal* Scale, it has *just none at all*. *Lastly*, Should

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LETTERS *published in*

we admit that *equal Doubtfulness* can infer
any Obligation, it must be a very *inadequate*
one, *unfit* for God to give, *useless* for Man-
kind to receive; such a Case therefore can
never happen.

I am,

SIR, *Yours,*

H. S.



To



To RICHARD HOOKER, *Esq;*

S I R,

THERE has lately appeared a small Pamphlet, entitled, *An Apology for Dr. CODEX*, the Design of which is to expose the Bishop of *London*, for opposing the Promotion of a certain Gentleman; not long since recommended to a vacant Bishoprick. The Ground of the Opposition, (*most* talked of) are certain *Words* said to have been spoken by that Gentleman in private Conversation *thirteen* or *fourteen* Years ago, of which the Bishop has (it seems) received Information; and very hard Things are said both of the Gentleman who gave the Information, and of his Lordship for paying so much Regard to it, as to make it an Objection to the Promotion. Of the Merits of this Cause I do not take upon myself to judge; but as a *Stander-by* I will take the Liberty of considering, whether,

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upon

upon the Face of Things, as they appear *at present*, the Bishop or the Informer deserves the Censures passed upon them by this Writer.

There are three Points which naturally offer themselves to our Enquiry, *viz.* Were the Words spoken by the Gentleman in this Conversation *really offensive*, or not? Was it right in the Person, who heard and remembers those Words, to *disclose* them to the Bishop, in order to stop the Promotion? Does it appear that the Bishop hath paid *greater Regard* to such Information than he *ought* to have paid? Under these Heads I shall reduce what I have to trouble you with on his Occasion.

The first Point will easily be dispatched. The Apologist does not deny that *Words were spoken* and only says, that they *do not yet appear to be wrong* *, and that *perhaps they are right* †. To whom does it not yet appear that the Words were wrong? Why to the *Apologist* HIMSELF. And does he know what the Words were? If he does, why did he not set them down, that

* pag. 9.

† pag. 11.

that *the World* might judge of them as well as *he*? If not, to what Purpose is it that he troubles us with his *Surmises*? The Presumption *naturally* lies, that the Words *were* wrong, till the *contrary appears*; and I am apprehensive, that whenever the *Apologist* undertakes to shew that they were *not* wrong, he will do it in such a way, as will do the Gentleman no Service.

Upon the *second* Question we shall have more Work. Here the Gentleman who gave Information to the Bishop, is charged with *betraying Conversation*, which *from his concealing it so long, and suffering it to lie festering in his Bosom for so many Years, till such a critical Minute*, the *Apologist* concludes *could not be the Effect of Zeal, but must proceed either from his Envy or Resentment, or the Instigation or Fear of another. If (says he) the Principles of this worthy DOCTOR are too bad to suffer him to be a BISHOP, they ought before now to have disqualified him from receiving any other Preferments* *. No doubt! But it does not yet appear that the Gentleman *ever bad an*

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Oppor-

* pag. .9

Opportunity of objecting to the Doctor's Promotion till *now*; nor if he had been guilty of an Omission before, is it so *certain* a Proof, as the *Apologist* represents it, that his *present* Conduct is founded upon *undue* Motives. If he were interrogated upon the Subject, he might say, perhaps, that from the Time that *Conversation* happened, his Conduct has been uniform, as far as Circumstances would permit, that he *immediately*, and *without Reserve*, acquainted his Friends with what had passed, as many of them are said to be now ready to attest; that he several Years ago made the strongest Applications, by the *propereſt Hand*, to the *propereſt Person*, in order to prevent the Doctor's future Promotion; that since the Time when that Method proved ineffectual, (which it was not in *his* Power to hinder) there has been no other till the present, (which ought not only to be looked on as a *Legal, Reasonable, and Christian* Method, practised in *all* Ages and Countries, and at this Time maintained under *all* Forms of Church-Government, which no Christian Society ever *did* or *can* relinquish) but also as the *first* real Opportunity, which has ever been offered.

Now

Now as to the general Charge of *betraying Conversation*; that is, of *disclosing* what one hears *said* in Conversation; every one knows, that this is either *right* or *wrong*, as Circumstances may happen. The *Apologist* himself tells us, that *some Discourses, such as Treason against the King and State, every Man of Honesty ought to discover: He owes it to his Honour, to his King, and to his Country* †. I desire no fairer Instance: And I will beg Leave to demand an Answer to this one plain Question. Suppose the *King* intended to make a certain Person *Secretary of State*, or a *General* in the Army, whom the *Apologist* knew, from some Words by him spoken, at some time or other in Conversation, to be *disaffected* to his Government, and in the Interest of the *PRETENDER*, would he not think himself bound upon his Allegiance to make Discovery of it? O! but, says the Gentleman, there is great Difference in Cases. As to the Purpose, *in but Matters of MEER SPECULATION, in Disputes where People are of various Sentiments, no one is obliged*

P 4

to

† pag. 10.

to discover to another's Prejudice what passes in Conversation: *No Man can be excused who does it.* I suppose that Men may differ in their *Sentiments* about the *Titles* of *Princes*, as well as any thing else, and therefore this is nothing to the Point. But the Argument turns upon *Matters of MEER SPECULATION*, which is so common a cant Word, that nobody can mistake it. *Matters of MEER SPECULATION* (in the Language of such Writers as this) ARE ALL *Matters of RELIGION* and the Gentleman's Meaning (if he would have spoke it out honestly) is this, That tho' in Cases where the Interest of *Civil Government* is concerned, a Man *may be obliged to disclose* what he hears in private Conversation, yet in Cases where the Interest of *Religion* alone is concerned, he cannot be so obliged: For which I *defy* him to give any *other* Reason than this, that tho' a Man owes *Duty* to his *King* and to his *Country*, yet he owes *none* to his *God*, or to his *Saviour*. Let him *say* this if he thinks fit: or if he will *not* say it, let him shew that the Interest of Religion is not *as much* concerned in making *Bishops*, as the Interest of the

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the Commonwealth is concerned in making *Generals* or *Secretaries* of *State*.

Under the last Head there are two Things to be considered. The *Matter* of the *Information*, and the *Character* of the *Informer*. As to the *Informer*, the Apologist tells us, that he is a *Trifler* *, a *Witness* who ought not to be thought a credible one. But what has he said to *prove* this? Not one Word. For I presume it will not be thought a *Proof* that a *Witness* deserves no *Credit*, to say (and only to say it) that he is a *Bigot*, that he is influenced by *corrupt Views*, and the *Vanity* of getting himself a *Name* †. If *Views*, *present Views* are to be considered in this Case, perhaps it would be no hard Matter to determine on which Side those *Views* will fall. But I have no Mind to draw odious Comparisons, and therefore shall dismiss this Point only with observing, that (for what appears at *present*) the *Credibility* of the *Witness* stands *without Exception*. The *Apologist* has given *full Proof* of his own *Charity* and *Good-manners*, and of *nothing* else.

But

* pag. 9.

† pag. 13.

But to the Matter of the Information, what shall we say? *An accidental Word, which the Informer may probably have forgot, or misunderstood,—Words spoken unwarily,—in the Warmth of Argument,—without considering the due Force of them,—only to support Conversation, and to bear the Opinion of his Friends **. These are the *Suggestions*. From the whole of which the only thing I can *certainly* gather, is this, That the *Apologist* knows *nothing of the Matter*. No doubt a Distinction should be made between *careless* and *hasty* Expressions, and Words spoken *deliberately* and *ex animo*. The Distinction arises from a Man's *general Character*. And does the *Apologist* know, or has he shewn, that the *Informer* or the *Bishop* has not such Knowledge of the Gentleman's *general Character*, as will *justify* them in believing that the Words (whatever they were) were spoken *ex animo*? The Publick has been very lately acquainted, That the Bishop's *Dislike of the Promotion of this Person* was expressed where it was proper, before he had the Knowledge of what
passed

* pag. II.

passed in this Conversation †; which is an Evidence that the Bishop *had* some Exceptions to his *general* Character, and that he consider'd this Case not as it stood *singly*, but as *connected* with his *general* Character. The Gentleman may be wronged for aught I know, and I heartily wish it may *appear* so. But till it *does* appear, I cannot see what *Imputation* can *justly* fall upon his Lordship for shewing his *Dislike* of the *Promotion*, and desiring that the Matter may pass under such examination as the Law allows in such Cases. The Apologist seems to lay great Stress upon this Circumstance, that the Words were spoken *thirteen or fourteen Years ago*. But I see not what Advantage he can draw from it; for if his *later* Conduct should happen to *tally* with what was said even twenty Years ago, and there should be no *Proof* that the Gentleman has since altered his Opinions, (which is *certainly* a proper Matter of ENQUIRY) this will not make the Case *better*, but *much worse*, as it will shew him more *habitually addicted* to that Way of Thinking.

But

† See *Miscellany*, N^o 70.

But the *great Secret* which lies at Bottom, I perceive is this, that a Man's Faith is of so little Consequence, as not to be *worth* being *brought* to *Examination*. The *Apolo-gist* says great Things of the Gentleman's *Parts*.—THIS at least is a Point out of all Question *.

He says likewise that he has *Vertue*, *Knowledge*, *Modesty*, and *Benevolence*. But all this is foreign to the Purpose, since he well knows, that the Question is not about his *Morality*, but his Orthodoxy. But what is Orthodoxy? a meer *Nothing*, as I will shew you from these Passages.

‘ All Essentials of Religion are very clear
‘ in the Holy Writings. In those Points
‘ which are *not* essential, if a Man is doubt-
‘ ful, What Mischief can he do by his
‘ Doubts? If he publishes not his Opinion,
‘ What Harm can the Church receive? If
‘ he does publish it, there will be always
‘ Men of Learning ready to refute the Er-
‘ ror †.’ From hence it seems manifest,
that in Points *not* essential, it is of no Con-
sequence what a Man *thinks* or *publishes*,
and

* See Dr. R—'s Sermon. † pag. 15.

and *such* are ALL Points (in the Opinion of our *Apologist*) about which Men are capable of *differing*. For ALL ESSENTIALS are VERY CLEAR. If this will not satisfy, go on a little farther.---‘ If a Man
‘ is represented as wrong in his Faith, How
‘ is he to be tried? Why (says the *Apologist*)
‘ by his Works. If Men find he is sober
‘ in his Conversation, courteous in his Behaviour, strict in his Life, generous to the
‘ Poor and Unhappy; if he is beloved by
‘ Men of Virtue, and esteemed by Men of
‘ Knowledge, *they will* SUPPOSE (and
‘ ought no doubt to suppose) that he is
‘ right in *Faith* in what is essential to Religion *.’ The Amount of all which is, That if a Man be but *rich*, and keeps a *good House*, and entertains his Friends *elegantly*,---and has *bright Parts*, his FAITH should never be called in Question. For why? it is to be SUPPOSED that he believes all that is *necessary* to be believed. As this kind of Defence does the Doctor *little Credit*, so I hope he will have no Occasion to *make use* of it. But you see where the
Apologist

* pag. 17.

Apologist has left the Argument. If Faith is *nothing*, the Bishop and the *Informer* are both *inexcusable*. If it is *something*, they may (for what yet appears) be both in the right.

I might here dismiss both the Subject and the *Apologist*; but I must first take Notice of a surprizing Calumny that is, up and down throughout the Pamphlet, injudiciously thrown upon the Bishop of *London*. He is said to be a Man quite unapproachable by the inferior Clergy, of whom they speak with *Fear* and *Trembling*; *without Benevolence, full of Pride and Haughtiness*. In this *wild Declamation* I know not which most to admire, the *Imprudence* or the *Dishonesty*! When a wise Enemy attacks a Man of Character, he usually fastens upon *some* Objection, which his Adversary is *at least charged with*, however unjustly. But to pitch upon a Fact, for the very *contrary* of which his *Lordship* is *even* famous, can proceed from nothing but an Opinion, which he had before advanced for other Purposes; *viz.* That every thing will become *doubtful*, which any one shall think fit to *dispute*. I will take upon me to affirm, that *all* his Clergy, under whatsoever different Interests.

they are ranged, yet agree in this, that his *Lordship* is accessible to all, ready to hear their Complaints, and free to give them his Advice. Nor are the Limits of his Diocese, the Limits of his Care and Diligence. He is from all Places applied to in Cases of Difficulty; nor do I know any Place where he ever denied his Assistance. But I will venture to tell the *Apologist* what is the Cause of all this *Rancour*. His *Lordship* makes a noble Stand against *Infidelity*, and by that Means has drawn upon himself the keenest Resentments of the whole *Infidel* Party. He has *himself* published several judicious Pieces in Defence of our Faith, and employed several able Pens in the same excellent Cause. These are the *Crimes*, which make him appear so odious in some Mens Eyes! These the Parts of his Conduct, which no *Deist* will ever *forgive*, and no *Christian* ever *forget*.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.



To Mr. HOOKER.

S I R,

ONE of your Correspondents observed very justly, that the present Set of Pamphleteers, who are engaged in the Cause of *Infidelity*, give us their own Pictures in the Representations which they make of their Adversaries. It is as natural, I presume, for a *good* Man, warmly interested in the most glorious Cause of *Religion*, to delineate in his Writings the noble Ardour which animates him. In this Light it must be a Pleasure to every virtuous Reader, to view the Description and Recommendation which another of your Correspondents has given us of *Religious Zeal*. In painting that exalted Passion, the Author, I dare say, sat to *himself*; and there seems to be so much Nature in the Piece, we may venture to pronounce it a like Picture, without knowing the *Original*. There is a Simplicity in it which Hypocrisy could not counterfeit; a genuine, glowing Warmth, which

which must come from the *Heart*, and not the *Head*. I wish it may produce the usual Effect of good Pictures, and kindle in the Breast of every one that sees it; the holy Fire which it represents so strongly. But to drop the Figure, and speak out of Metaphor. Every attentive Reader must see the Force of his Arguments, and every unprejudiced one will be influenced by them. But I hope the worthy Gentleman will excuse me, if I observe, that it will lose a great deal of its Force, unless it be made more *particular*, so as to shew every one how far he is concerned in the Duty. Ask any Man, that is not a professed *Infidel*, whether a Zeal for *Religion* be not a reasonable Affection, and he will be ready enough to acknowledge it, but perhaps not so easily perceive how the Obligation reaches himself. *Private* Persons are apt to satisfy themselves with their own private Faith and Morals, not imagining that they are at all accountable for the Faith and Morals of the *Publick*. There is a Set of Men appointed and maintained for the Service of Religion, and the rest of the World seem to think it a Piece of Impertinence to take any Part of the Business out of their Hands. You,

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Mr.

Mr. *Hooker*, are an Exception to this general Error, and if what I here send you deserves a Place in your Paper, I shall esteem it an Honour to be another. Tho' we have no Commission to *preach*, the *Press* is open, *Conversation* is free, and every *Layman*, who has a Capacity, has a *Right*, which he is obliged to exercise, to defend his *Faith*, and promote the Interest of *Religion*. The comparative Obligation of *Clergymen* and *Laymen* is wrongly stated. *Clergymen* are so far from being the *only* Persons obliged to express a warm Zeal for *Religion*, they are not, properly speaking, *more* obliged than *Laymen*. EVERY Man is under *equal* Obligations, since every Man is obliged to do *all that is in his Power*, and none can do more. As the *Supreme Good* and *Sovereign Lord* of the Universe, God has a Right to all our Faculties and Affections, and we ought to employ them for his Service and Honour. As *Christians* we are all listed in the Service of our Master, and it is the Duty of *Subjects* to study and endeavour to promote the Interest, and consult the Glory of their *Prince*. As Members of the Community, we are all under Obligations to have a zealous Concern for its Welfare, which

which must flourish or decay, in proportion as Religion gains or loses Ground in the Hearts and Actions of Men. The common Tie of *Humanity* will not suffer us to be unconcerned whether Men believe those Truths, and observe those Duties, upon which their Happiness depends. All these Obligations, respecting our CREATOR, our REDEEMER, the Interest of the PUBLICK, the Good of our FELLOW CREATURE, extend to *all Men equally*. The Difference lies not in the *Obligation*, which is *common*, but in the *Capacity*, the *Opportunity*, the *Manner* of shewing our Zeal, which are as various as the different *Talents*, *Stations*, and *Circumstances* of Mankind. It cannot be said, that one Man is *more obliged* to be a *good* Man than another, and yet one may be obliged to be *better* than another. So, tho' *all* Christians are *equally* obliged to have Zeal for *Christianity*, yet some may be obliged to have *more* Zeal, as they may have larger Faculties, and better Means of Improvement. *Clergymen* are *set apart* for the Service of *Religion*; they are supposed, by the Duties of their Profession, to have studied more particularly the Grounds of the *Christian Faith*, to have established in their

Minds a stronger Conviction of its Truth, and to have considered more distinctly the great Excellency and Benefits of *Christianity*. By a more constant Attendance upon the Ordinances of Religion, and by the Frequency of publick Devotions, which are the strongest Means of Improvement; by being obliged, in order to the Discharge of their Function, to be daily meditating on Religious Truths and Motives; their Minds must be possessed with an habitual, lively, vigorous Sense of their Duty; their Thoughts more abstracted and spiritualized: By the Means of all these advantageous Circumstances, they may be presumed to have a greater *Degree* of Zeal for *Religion*, than the *Generality* of Mankind, who have not the same Opportunities of Information, nor the same Means of Improvement in Religious Dispositions, *their* Thoughts being more immersed in worldly Affairs, and their Affections engaged. I hope the *Clergy* (for whom I have the sincerest Respect and Affection) will excuse me one Observation on this Occasion, *viz.* that when any of them (for some such there ever will be) discover a *Worldly-mindedness*, and an *Unconcernedness* for *Religion*, it staggers the Faith of others, and

and confirms *Unbelievers* in their *Infidelity*. If *Christianity* be true, it is natural to imagine, that those will have the strongest Conviction of its Truth and Importance, whose Business it is to make themselves best acquainted with its Evidence, and that such a strong Conviction will naturally produce a proportionable Degree of *Affection*; and therefore, if a *Clergyman* seems to make it the chief Study and Aim of his Life, not to promote the Interest of *Religion*, but his own worldly Interest; if he teaches others that *Christians* are to set light to the Things of this World, while he himself is openly grasping as much of it as he can get, Mankind will be too apt to judge of his *Faith* by his *Practice*, and (which is a more absurd Way of judging) of the Truth of his Religion, by the Inconsistency of his Conduct. And having made this Observation, I should be injurious to that venerable and useful Body of Men, if I did not take notice at the same time, that *Christianity* was never defended with greater Strength of Argument, or greater Warmth of *Zeal*, than by the present Set of *Clergy*; tho' I could wish, for the Credit of *Religion*, that the

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Laity were entitled to a larger Share of the Glory. But to return,

An affectionate Concern for the Interest of *Christianity*, and a constant Endeavour to promote it, is the Duty of *every Christian*, and, in some Degree, in every one's Power, GOVERNORS can guard it by wholesome Laws, and encourage it by their Countenance. MAGISTRATES may put those Laws in Execution, and aid them by their Example. GENTLEMEN have great Opportunities of discountenancing *Infidelity*, and giving Encouragement to Virtue. And as they have been educated to Letters, and have Leisure to improve the Advantages of their liberal Education, many of them might become *Advocates*, by their Writings and Conversation. Their easy independent Circumstances would give Sprightliness to their Compositions, and their constant Correspondence with Men and Books of Taste, would give a genteel and agreeable Turn to their Style and Language, as their supposed Disinterestedness would give more Force to their Arguments; whereas the Writings of *Clergymen* always labour under the Disadvantage of that *impertinent* Cavil, that *Religion* is their Trade and their Interest.

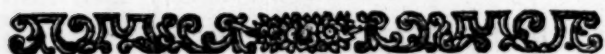
TRADESMEN,

TRADESMEN, even down to the lowest *Mechanick*, may shew their Zeal, and do Service many ways: If they cannot *write*, many of them have ample Fortunes, and a large Influence, by which they may circulate and enforce proper Antidotes to the present spreading Infection. This is the constant Practice of *Infidels*, and their Success is answerable. If *Christians* would imitate their Example, the Number of their Profelytes would soon become as trifling as their Performances. Every FATHER and MASTER, by his Authority, can oblige his Family to attend *publick* Instructions, instil good Principles in *private*, and keep out of his House *conceited Scepticks*, who creep in and lead captive weak Minds by their Sophistry. EVERY MAN has it in his Power to avoid the *Friendship* at least, if not all Correspondence, with those Pests of Society, and by setting a Mark of Disgrace upon them, oblige them, for their own Sake, to conceal their *Infidelity*.

I am, Yours,

H. S.

Q 4



To RICHARD HOOKER, Esq;

S I R,

AMONG the many Topicks of Conversation, which this Winter has furnish'd the Town with, one of the most remarkable is about the Necessity and Method of preventing *Clandestine Marriages*. The Necessity of doing something in that Case will easily be acknowledg'd; for there are few Concerns in human Life, that better deserve the Care of the Government, than settling *Matrimonial Cases* by such wise Regulations, as will preserve the Honour of Families, and secure the Peace and Happiness of Society. The Method also of effecting this may not be very difficult; but that I leave to those within whose Province it properly lies. My only Design is to point out one *Method*, which cannot be *proper*; because, as I conceive, it is not *lawful*; and that is, the *annulling all Clandestine Marriages*, so that the Parties may be free to enter

enter into new Contracts with other Persons, even tho' the former Marriage was consummated, and Issue begotten during their Cohabitancy. This Measure may have been suggested; but, I hope, it will never be reduced to Practice, while the Nation retain their usual Spirit against *Slavery* and *Popery*. There were such Laws among the *Persians* and *Indians*, and even among the old *Romans*; tho' *Aristotle* condemns them as barbarous and tyrannical in the former, and their own Authors stigmatize them under the same Character in the latter. Nor is it any wonder, that in those Times and Places, where Parents were allowed to expose, sell at *Pleasure*, and even slay their Children, the same *Tyranny* should violate every other Right, that stood in the way of their Designs. However, *Constantine the Great*, under the glorious Sunshine of Christianity (always the truest Friend to *real Liberty*) abolished all those Laws, and restored the *Nuptial State* to that Freedom, with which the Law of Nature, or the Divine Institution had made it Free. Thus stood the Matter in general, till *Popery*, which sacrificed all our other Civil and Religious Liberties to its own exorbitant Power, interfered

ferred at last in our *Domestick* Rights, and presum'd either to *annul* good Marriages, or *ratify* bad ones, as to his *Holiness* it should appear fitting and convenient. And, doubtless, if *He* can make Vice Virtue, and Virtue Vice, his Claim is founded on a sufficient Bottom. However, tho' the *Council* of *Trent*, in its 8th Session, declares all *Clandestine Contracts* to be *Null*, yet the Congregation of *Cardinals* (as *Navarrus* tells us in his *Enchirid.* c. 25.) were so ashamed of this vile Decree, that they directly deny the Fact, and now maintain the *Validity* of such Contracts, as well since the Council as before, consulting (as he goes on) herein more the Council's Honour than their own, who blush not to deny a Thing so palpable and notorious. Not long before, the *Sovereign Pontiff* exerted this same Power by a contrary Extreme, and, in the Case of *Henry VIII.* attempted to *ratify* a Marriage between the King and his Brother's Wife, in Defiance of the Laws of God, and the Christian Church. This gave the first Rise to the *Reformation*. Here we stood at Bay with the *Papal* Authority; and declared, with invincible Resolution, that no Power on Earth could reverse or alter those Mar-
riage

riage Articles, which the Laws of God or Nature had made sacred. And shall any thing be done now to discountenance the Principles of the *Reformation*, especially at a time when *Popery* is making new Advances among us? *Precontract* and *Consanguinity* are judged to be the only Causes (supposing no natural Inability) that can *null* Matrimony, neither of which can be deem'd the Effects of *Civil Jurisdiction*, but are founded in the Law of *God* and *Nature*. I am aware, Mr. *Hooker*, it may be pretended, that there is nothing repugnant to these Principles in the *Proposal* I at first mentioned to you: that the Civil Power will not hereby *null* Marriages, but only by its previous Injunctions hinder those Contracts from becoming *Marriages*, which *otherwise* would have been such. Now this Objection may be allowed to have some Weight in it, if the Consent of *Society* enters into the Nature of Matrimony; whereas, if its *Being* be *complete* without it, the Civil Power can neither *make* it, nor *null* it. The Sense of Mankind has been sufficiently discover'd by this constant Maxim, *That Consent of Parties constitutes Matrimony*; which Maxim may be well supported, if we first make the following

following Distinction ; namely, between the *Nature* of Marriage, and the *Celebration, Circumstances, Rites, and legal Privileges* that attend it. The latter are wholly in the Breast of the Government, which may prescribe about the Dowry, Succession, Descent, Inheritance, and all other Civil Properties, as it pleases; and, in *this Sense*, legitimate or illegitimate Children, as they shall find it convenient for the Inforcement of their own Laws. I do most readily allow, that it is, *ordinarily*, necessary to the *Integrity* of a Subject's Duty, that he observe the Directions of his Superiors in the Marriage-Contract, but not *essential* to the *Validity* of that Contract. *Fieri non debet, sed factum valet*, is most justly here applied. St. Paul absolutely prohibits any *Christian* from marrying with an *Infidel*, and yet the Believing Wife was not to *depart* from the Unbelieving Husband. That the *Consent of the Civil Power* is not *essential* to a *valid* Marriage, will appear from the following short Consideration. *First*, It was not derived from Government, but subsisted before it, and would still subsist, were Government extinct. The Civil Power may assist and help to execute all the other Positive Laws
of

of Nature as well as this, but can create or destroy none of them, nor make my Wife cease to be my Wife, any more than my Mother to be my Mother. Our *Saviour's* Reasoning in the 19th of *St. Matthew*, about *Divorces*, is drawn from this Topick. The *Pharisees*, fearful lest the *Jewish Sanhedrin* had intermeddled too far about the Rights of Wedlock, and yet willing to defend the Lengths they had gone from the Permission of their Law-giver, ask our *Lord's* Opinion : What does he say ? Does he allow the Marriage-Contract lay within the Verge of the Civil Jurisdiction ? No : He says, *Moses* only conniv'd at it for the *Hardness of their Hearts* ; but from the *Beginning* it was not so. He calls them back to the *Beginning* to judge of the Nature of Matrimony ; and declares, that, for the future, he would not, among his Disciples, permit what *Moses* had permitted to the *Jews*. Secondly, From the Nature, Ends, and Purposes of Government, which are entirely distinct from the Nature, Ends, and Purposes of Marriage. The chief Ends of Government are to defend us in our Property, to secure us against Injuries, and to do for us by the united Care and
Strength

Strength of the Society, what we could not do for ourselves singly and separately : But the Intendment of Matrimony is to propagate Mankind, to preserve our Chastity, and receive from each other the natural Comforts of the Sexes ; all which we do not as *Subjects*, but as *Men and Women* : *Quam dispar Ratio !* and as the Purposes are different, so is the Nature also. The one consists in a Contract, or Obligation to perform the Duties of one State, the other in a Contract and Obligation to perform the Duties of the other State. For this Account of the Nature of Marriage, I do not only appeal to all the best *Political* Writers, but call in the Assistance of *St. Paul*, whose *Authority* and *Reasoning* I at the same time equally lay in my Claim to. In 1 *Cor.* vii. 4. the Apostle makes the *Essence* of Marriage to consist in the Woman's making over the Power of her own Body to the Husband, and the Husband's making over the Power of his own Body to the Wife. A Definition clearer and fuller than all the Philosophers among the Antients ever gave ! Not much unlike to which is that beautiful Expression in the Prophet *Malachi*, *Thy Companion, and the Wife of thy Covenant*. But,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I must observe what will put an End to any farther Debate upon this Subject, *viz.* That the Consent of the Civil Power is so far from being *essential* to the *Validity* of the Marriage-Contract, that a Case *may* be put, wherein it is the *Duty* of a Christian to marry, tho' the Laws of his Country expressly forbid him to enter into that State; and, consequently, there may be a lawful Marriage, which the Law prohibits: I mean that famous Case of *Burning*, mentioned by the same Apostle in the same Chapter: To avoid Fornication, says he, let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman have her own Husband.—That Satan tempt them not for their *Incontinency*—let them marry, for it is better to marry than to *Burn*. And afterwards, tho' he tells them that, *in the present Distress*, it were better not to marry, yet he would not have them *cast into a Snare*. In like manner, our *Blessed Saviour* told his Disciples, *That tho' there be Eunuchs, who had made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake; i. e.* led a single Life for the Propagation of the Gospel, yet, he said, *all Men cannot receive this Saying, save they to whom it is given.*

Well

Well then, here is an *unalienable* Right, which cannot be taken away by, or given up to the Government; and that because it is the necessary Consequence of an *unalterable* Duty. 'Tis every one's Duty to avoid *Incontinency*: He that has a Right to the *End*, has a Right to the *Means*: The only *Mean* to Chastity is *Marriage*; they have therefore a Right to *Marriage*, which no one can deprive them of. This Argument is the more remarkable, because it clearly decides the Question in the Affirmative, about the Lawfulness of a *Bishop's* marrying a *second* Wife. Learned Men, especially among the Papists, have thought some *ambiguous* Expressions of *St. Paul* contain'd the contrary Doctrine. But his plain and clear Words fully confute that Notion. The Prohibition (whatever be the Sense of it) that relates to *Bishops*, is the very same which respects *Priests* and *Deacons*; and, consequently, if it does prohibit, it equally prohibits all the Clergy, even those who shall lose their Wives in their younger Years. If so, those Expressions *cannot* be understood in the Popish Sense; for, if they are, this will be the Consequence; either that all the Clergy in *Christendom* have the miraculous

miraculous Gift of Continency, or else that it is better for them, and them only, to *Burn* than to marry. But as this is absurd, so must the Interpretation of those Places be, from whence such Doctrine is deduced. And, by the bye, it is one Mark of human Frailty in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, which determine this Matter so contrary to *St. Paul*.

But to return. It may be objected, That tho' the Contracts of *Grown* People should be look'd upon as *Valid*, yet during the State of *Legal Infancy* all Marriages might be rescinded.

To which I answer briefly, That the Age of Contracting commences from the Time of the Necessity there is for making such a Contract. The Time when young Persons come to be obliged (says *Bishop Taylor*, in his celebrated *Ductor Dubitantium*) is the Time when they come to the Use of Reason, when they understand their Duty, when a Prudent Man judges them fit to be contracted with, when they can use Fraud to others, when they can consider whether they be bound or no: These are the best Marks and Signatures of the Time.

I have now done with the *Reasoning* upon the Point; and to shew you that I am far from
R being

being singular in my Notions, will subjoin the Authorities of some of the best Casuists that *England* ever bred. Our famous *Bishop Hall* writes as follows; *But tho' such Marriages without, or against, Consent, be not lawfully made; yet, being once made, they are valid. The Civil Law, out of the Grounds of Policy, goes herein too far; which sentenceth those Marriages void, which are made without the Consent of Parents or Guardians: But as Matrimony hath something in it of NATURE, something of CIVILITY (i. e. Civil Law) something of DIVINITY, as instituted by God, and by him to be regulated; so sure this last Interest ought to over-
 sway the other two; the Marriage therefore thus made, being, tho' faulty, yet true, is, doubtless after Consummation, indissoluble. The Parties Repentance, and Parents Sorrow, may have leisure to afflict them, no Power to relieve them. The other I shall quote to you, is Bishop Taylor, in his Ductor Dubitantium.*

' This happens (says he) in Clandestine
 ' Contracts, against which, in the Matter
 ' of Marriage, all Christian Countries have
 ' made severe Edicts: But in case they be
 ' done in some Places they are pronounced
 ' valid, in some declared null; where they
 ' are

are nulled, Nature is defeated in making Provisions, and the Parties are warranted to do a Mischief: For if *Mauritius* and *Cluviena* contract Marriage, and *Mauritius* repent his Bargain, where shall *Cluviena* be relieved? The Law of the Church forbids it, and will punish her for doing it, *if she complains: The Civil Law takes no Notice of it*; for it cannot be legally proved, and the Law of Nature is barred out, if it be declared null, and then there is nothing left to hold him. It is the Case of the Church of *Rome*, who, in the eighth Session of the Council of *Trent*, declares all clandestine Marriages to be null, and their Mixtures to be Fornication and Uncleannefs. But they have overacted their Zeal against a temporal Inconvenience, and *burn their House to roast an Egg*; they destroy a Law of Nature, by a Law of the Church, against the former Practices, Counfels and Resolutions even of their own Church. For if those Contracts are in themselves naturally valid, and not forbidden by God, then they cannot rescind them; if they be not naturally valid, since they were always positively forbidden, why were they es-

' teemed valid for so many Ages? For 'till
 ' that Council they were so, but finding
 ' that the former Prohibitions were not
 ' strong enough, they took this Course to
 ' break them all to Pieces; and out of
 ' Desire to prevent an accidental Evil, they
 ' made it more ready to be done; for it was
 ' before but feared lest they should recede;
 ' but yet, if they did, they were esteemed
 ' *Adulterers*, if they married again, and
 ' they themselves knew when they were
 ' pre-contracted, and therefore stood con-
 ' victed and pinched in their own Consci-
 ' ences, so long as the old Laws remained,
 ' and Men did not receive *Warrants* to
 ' break the most sacred Bands in the World;
 ' but by this nullifying the Contract, they
 ' have not only Leave to go off, but are
 ' commanded; and if they be weary of
 ' this, they may contract with another; and
 ' there is nothing to hinder them, if Na-
 ' ture does not. This *Nullity* therefore is
 ' a vehement Remedy, that destroys the
 ' Patients; besides that, it is against the
 ' Law of Nature. The Laws may forbid
 ' it to be done, but if it be, they cannot
 ' *rescind* it, because the Civil Constitution
 ' is less then the Natural, and Convenience
 ' is

‘ is less than Conscience, and Man is infinitely less than God.

‘ In Marriage (says he) there are three Things, *Unity, Society, and Mystery.* The last is of Spiritual Cognisance, the first is in the Power of the *Contractors*, the latter in the Power of the *Commonwealth.* As much as is in the Power of the Law, is fit to be done for securing the *Father’s* Authority; but the Laws themselves have a *Limit*, and tho’ they can verify their own Acts, they cannot annul the Act of God.’

From hence, Sir, guess what Confusion and Adultery would follow, if the *proposed Measure* should be carried into Execution. A new Contract would not extinguish their old Affections, and Men would think they had a Right, by the Law of God, to lie with one Woman, and by the Law of the Land, with another: Will this be *Concubitus prohibere vagos, dare jura Maritis?* Several will enter upon these Courses with this very View, and, in all, their Love must be less entire and sincere. But, Sir, there is one Thing that in particular affects the Clergy. By the Laws of Christianity they are not to communicate such as live in open

Adultery, and yet the Persons repell'd will think it hard to be refused that *Ordinance* during their Lives: How the Law and Gospel can, in this Instance, be reconciled, is more than I can see. In short, Sir, in this, as well as most other Instances, it were to be wished, that we might keep to our good old, tried, experienced Rules, one of which is, *Whom God hath joined together, let no Man put asunder.*

I am,

Yours,

SARAVIA.



To



To RICHARD HOOKER, *Esq;*

S I R,

THE *Old Whig*: or, *The Consistent Protestant*, is a Paper which I observe you have *not often* thought fit to take notice of. Besides the general *Lowness* of his Performance, and the ungentlemanlike Railings with which it perpetually abounds, one Reason I presume may be, that this *Old Whig*, however consistent with himself, being quite a *new* Protestant of his own making, and such as was never acknowledged and received by any Society of that Name either at home or abroad since the Reformation, you imagin'd that it did not peculiarly belong to you to take him under your Care, but that the Dissenters, to whom it is *pretended* this Author belongs, were more immediately concern'd to provide a proper Remedy for his Poison. Why they do not, I cannot say, but I must do them

the Justice to own, that I hear he is disliked and disrelished by all the grave and serious Persons of that Body. However, Mr. *Hooker*, you must give me leave to put you in mind, that, when this *Consistent Protestant* does in the *most particular manner* set himself against the *Church of England*, as distinct from other Christian Communions among us Protestants, when by *false Facts*, and *malicious Interpretations*, he endeavours to traduce her *Offices*, and expose her *Doctrines* to the Ignorant and Unwary ; but above all, when his wicked Misrepresentations don't terminate on our excellent Establishment, but lie equally, if at all, against all the positive Rites and Institutions of the Christian Religion ; when this happens to be the Case, Mr. *Hooker*, it is high time for you to unmask such a Writer, and shew him in his proper Colours to your Countrymen.

If you cast your Eye upon the *Old Whig* of *August 4*, you will find a tragical Declaration against a Clause in one of the Prayers which the Church of *England* uses in her Office of *Confirmation*. The Prayer which immediately precedes the laying on of the Hands, is this: " Almighty and Everlasting
" God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate
" these

“ these thy Servants by Water, and the Holy
 “ Ghost, and hast given unto them *Forgive-*
 “ *ness of all their Sins*; Strengthen them,
 “ we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy
 “ Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase
 “ in them thy manifold Gifts of Grace, &c.”

The Writer of that Paper represents the *Regeneration* and *Forgiveness of Sins* as the Effect of *Confirmation*; whereas it is no more than a Recital of the Effects of *Baptism*, and is plainly taken from St. Paul's *Epistle to Titus*, iii. 5. *According to his Mercy he saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Upon which Dr. Hammond's Commentary is as follows: “ He
 “ rescued and delivered us out of our sinful
 “ Courses, put us into a State of Salvation
 “ upon our giving ourselves up in Baptism
 “ his Vowed Reform'd Servants, sealing unto
 “ us the Pardon of all our Sins, and then be-
 “ stowing his Spirit upon us, to bring forth
 “ in us all Fruits of new Life.”

In Conformity to this Scripture Doctrine, our Church, in the Office of Baptism, prays that the Child may be washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost,—That in Baptism he may receive *Remission of his Sins* by Spiritual Regeneration,—That Christ will *release*
him

him out of his Sins, and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost. And, after Baptism, the Thanksgiving to God is, That it hath pleased him to *regenerate* the Child with his Holy Spirit. In conformity to those, the Office of *Confirmation* recites what the Person to be confirmed *had* received at his *Baptism*, *viz.* Forgiveness of Sins, and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost; and so far is that Office from making these the Effects of Confirmation, that the Mention of them is in the Prayer that *precedes* the Imposition of Hands, which is properly the *Act of Confirming*. So far also is the Office from giving Encouragement to Sin on a *new Score*, (according to the Representation of the *Old Whig*) that it consists of the most solemn Declaration of the Person to be confirmed against continuing in Sin, and of the Prayers of the Church for *Spiritual Strength* to enable him to live suitably to that Declaration. The suggesting *such an Office* to be an Encouragement to continue in Sin is a Charge so——, that one does not readily know what Name to give it.

Thus, Sir, have I laid before you a fair State of the Objection, on which this dreadful Outcry against the Church of *England* is grounded,

grounded, and I fear not but every impartial and attentive Reader will allow the Answer to be full and sufficient. But I have not yet done with this intemperate Writer, but must present you with some outrageous Calumnies, which he has flung not only upon the Church, but a great part of the people of *England*, which I believe cannot be parallel'd in any other Writer. As to the Church, he wickedly suggests to the World, that she maintains, and in her Offices proceeds upon the following most impious Doctrine, which I believe no settled Body of Men in Christendom ever ventur'd to affirm: Namely, That she *encourages* her Members, to believe that they may be certified of God's Goodness and Favour in *their Regeneration and Pardon without parting with their Vices, and the Trouble of Repentance*. This Conduct he charges on all the Bishops of *England* (whom he *sneeringly* compliments with the Title of Learned, Wise, and Pious Men) for no other Reason but that they seriously perform the *Confirmation Office* as they ought to do. But does the *Old Whig* mean that our Bishops *only encourage* this Belief in the People? Or that there are some things in our Church which *only carry too great Appearance* of the Spiritual

tual Juggle or Sorcery of the Church of Rome? No; by no means; This is only a little softning, a thin Cover for his Scandal, which perhaps he fear'd might otherwise subject him to some Trouble or Inconvenience. Look over, Mr. *Hooker*, the Paragraphs of the first Column as they lie in order, and tell me what Opinion he must necessarily entertain of us? In the first Paragraph he amuses his Reader about *Sorcery*, a kind of *Spiritual Magic*, or an Art of making Men *Religious*, and of sending them to Heaven without any real Holiness or Virtue at all. In the second, he asserts that the Popish Religion by its Pardons, Indulgences, and Absolutions, most egregiously gives Men Encouragement to expect Happiness after Death *in the actual Violation of Justice, Truth, and other Social Virtues*. In the third, he goes on by asking this Question. But is there nothing of *this* SAME *Sorcery*, this Art of making Men Religious without any real Goodness practis'd among us? Are there no Priests, but those of Rome, chargeable with *thus dangerously cheating* the Souls of Men? Nothing among *Protestants* that tends to weaken the Obligations of Moral Virtue, and *strikes at the very Foundations*

tions of Civil Society? What he means, or whom he means, I need not say; but will only observe, that in the subsequent Paragraph his Rage and Fury at last discharges itself upon the poor Church of *England* for its Offices of *Confirmation*, *Absolution*, and the *Burial of the Dead*.

Now what is there, Mr. *Hooker*, in any of these Offices that could provoke this Man so vilely to misrepresent us? He must pardon me, for I will insist upon it, that he *knows* the Church of *England* has clearly and constantly taught that there can be no Remission of Sins without *Repentance*. He *knows* that her Catechism, her Offices, her Devotions, her Homilies and her Articles are full to this Point. He *knows*, that her Clergy have never preached, nor her Laity received any other Doctrine. We may have differed, as all Churches have done, about several other Particulars, how far they are necessary to secure our Salvation; but surely no body ever omitted Repentance, but allowed it to be one essential and indisputable Term. In order to mislead us in so clear a Case, and frighten the Credulous into a Belief of what they had never before heard of, he seems to affect

affect to say something in the *ninth* Paragraph, and with a surprizing Pertness asks a Question, which he knew beforehand how we should and could answer: "Will a mere
 " *Profession, says he*, procure a certain and
 " full Forgiveness from Almighty God?—
 " By what Authority then, or with what
 " Face can a venerable Prelate stand up and
 " declare to Almighty God, that he has
 " vouchsafed to regenerate and forgive. The
 " Expressions are couched in the most absolute and strongest Terms; *there is no Condition implied.*" This has been already answered by shewing that the Prayer objected to, relates not to Confirmation but to Baptism, in which we have full Authority from God's Word to make the aforesaid Acknowledgment. But in *all* our other Offices *Conditions* are always *at least implied*, most commonly *expressed*. Let him look into our Absolutions, and our Communion Office, and he will find I have said no more than I can justify. But what more immediately concerns the present Purpose, let him consult the very Office of Confirmation, and he will observe that this *grievous Prayer* is preceded by a Question and an Answer. Whether

ther that does not fully imply a Condition in the very Nature of it, let all Men judge. But since this poor Man does not know the Use and Meaning of *Public Professions*, I will inform him. They have no essential Relation to Forgiveness, but serve to justify the Discipline of the Church in admitting none but fit Objects to the Use of her Offices. God forgives *only* where the Profession is real and sincere, the Church *admits* where it is outwardly made. And this the *Old Whig* might have seen in the unlucky Instance he quotes from the eighth of the Acts, had he not been in *the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity*. *Simon Magus* desires Baptism, and upon his Desire and *professing* to believe, it is granted him. That justified *Philip*, and yet the Man was inwardly wicked, and therefore God did not grant him Forgiveness.

The other Calumny I will take notice of, is upon a great Part of the People of *England*, whom he represents as coming to, or going from, the Office of Confirmation, in the most disorderly, drunken, and unchristian Manner. I thank God, I know this Assertion to be false, and whoever will frequent

frequent our Confirmations in or about
London, and I hope throughout the King-
dom, will see them perform'd in the most
decent and orderly Manner. *I am,*

S I R,

Yours, A. S.



To



To RICHARD HOOKER, Esq.

S I R,

IT may justly be reckon'd among the special Misfortunes which the Christian Faith labours under among us at present, that, while the Spirit of *Infidelity* is openly attacking the Fundamentals of all Religion, the opposite Spirit of *Enthusiasm* (as if one Extreme had begot another) should at the same time revive with most of the same Symptoms as appeared upon it, when it distracted our unhappy Country about an hundred Years ago. The *Atheists* may well rejoice, because they are sure to find their Account in it. For as the *Christian* is the only Religion which they are much afraid of, so if they can get Mankind to behold it in the ridiculous Light, in which *Bigotry* places it, Men of good Sense, but unsettled Judgment, will soon come to disesteem it, and then to

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disbelieve

disbelieve it. On this Account I presume the new Sect of the *Methodists* lately risen up among us, claims our particular Attention. At first we only look'd upon them as well-meaning zealous People, whom the irreligious Boldness of these wicked Times had driven somewhat too far into the contrary Extreme. They were a sort of *Protestant Supererogators*, that would be righteous overmuch; and there were Hopes that, when this devotional Effervescence had boil'd over, they would return to that proper Medium, where true Piety and Christian Prudence fixes its Centre. But, instead of that, they are constantly making, or discovering new Advances; and have proceeded so far as to eject the *Liturgy* and the *usual Expositors* out of their *Meetings*, and declar'd for *Extemporary* Effusions both in their *Prayers* and *Expoundings*. The *Laity* are allow'd to be *Teachers*, and even *Women*, as I am inform'd, begin to usurp publick Offices. If any one objects to these Absurdities, they are ready with an Answer, that makes them for the future quite unapproachable; for they alledge the *Spirit* for what they do, with whom they have, I know not what, Communications, and whose Impressions they receive

receive (as they say) even in a SENSIBLE Manner. They pretend to a sort of *sinless Perfection*, and boast of *inward Joys* above other Christians, and at the same time, like the *Quakers*, disclaim being able to describe or prove to other People, the *Nature* or *Necessity* of their Spiritual Condition. They distinguish themselves from others by having *received the Faith*, with which, and other such *Cant Phrases*, they are united together like a Set of *Religious Free-Masons*. The Efficacy of *Regeneration* they make not to arise from *Baptism* in Persons who have committed no *Actual Sin*, or from true *Christian Repentance* in those who have, (if that can, according to the Scripture Phraseology, be called *Regeneration*) unless it be attended with such inward *Motions, Feelings, and Experiences*, or accompanied with such confident Persuasions as neither they can explain, nor any body else understand, or at least compleated according to their Notions of *Justification by Faith*. In general, they seem to be practising over the Lesson set them by the *old Puritans* before the Beginning of the *grand Rebellion*. ‘ In the Confusions of those Times (*says Bishop Burnet*) ‘ there were set on foot great Abstractions

‘ concerning *Justification by Faith*, and these
 ‘ were both so subtle, and did seem to have
 ‘ such a tendency to *Antinomianism*, that
 ‘ many Books were writ on those Subjects.
 Before these Times we may observe most of
 the same Methods used by the *Anabaptists*
 in *Germany*, whose Beginnings were as in-
 nocent, tho’ I hope the dreadful and bloody
 Events will find no Parallel amongus. Take
 the Account of them, Mr. *Hooker*, from
 your Ancestor’s *Preface* to his immortal
 Work, as he quotes it from *Guy de Bres*,
 who writ their History.

‘ They began secretly with making their
 ‘ doleful Complaints every where as they
 ‘ went, that, albeit the World did begin to
 ‘ profess some Dislike of that which was evil
 ‘ in the Kingdom of Darkness, yet Fruits
 ‘ worthy of a true Repentance were not seen;
 ‘ and that if Men did repent as they ought,
 ‘ they must endeavour to purge the Truth of
 ‘ all manner of Evil, to the end there might
 ‘ follow a new World afterwards, wherein
 ‘ Righteousness only should dwell. Private
 ‘ Repentance, they said, must appear by
 ‘ every Man’s fashioning his own Life, con-
 ‘ trary unto the Custom and Orders of this
 ‘ present World, both in greater Things and
 ‘ in

‘ in less. To this purpose, they had always
‘ in their Mouths those greater Things, Cha-
‘ rity, Faith, the true Fear of God, the
‘ Cross, the Mortification of the Flesh. All
‘ their Exhortations were to set light of the
‘ Things in this World, to account Riches
‘ and Honours Vanity, and in token thereof,
‘ not only to seek neither, but if Men were
‘ Possessors of both, even to cast away the
‘ one, and resign the other, that all Men
‘ might see their unfeigned Conversion to
‘ *Christ*. They were Sollicitors of Men to
‘ *Fasts*, to often *Meditations* of heavenly
‘ Things, and, as it were, Conferences in
‘ secret with God by *Prayers*, not framed
‘ according to the frozen Manner of the
‘ World, but expressing such fervent Desire
‘ as might even force God to hearken unto
‘ them. Where they found Men in Diet,
‘ Attire, Furniture of House, or any other
‘ way, Observers of Civility and decent Or-
‘ der, such they reprov’d as being *carnally*
‘ and earthly minded. Every Word other-
‘ wise than severely and sadly uttered, seem’d
‘ to pierce like a Sword through them. If
‘ any Man were pleasant, their Manner was
‘ presently with Sighs to repeat those Words
‘ of our Saviour *Christ*, *Woe be to you which*

‘ *now laugh for ye shall lament.* So great was
 ‘ their Delight to be always in *Trouble*, that
 ‘ such as did quietly lead their Lives, they
 ‘ judged of all other Men to be in most dan-
 ‘ gerous Case.—From this they proceeded
 ‘ unto *publick Reformation*, first Ecclesiasti-
 ‘ cal and then Civil: Touching the former,
 ‘ they boldly avouched, that themselves only
 ‘ had the Truth, which Thing upon peril
 ‘ of their Lives they would at all Times de-
 ‘ fend; and that since the Apostles lived, the
 ‘ same was never before in all Points fin-
 ‘ cerely taught. Wherefore, that Things
 ‘ might again be brought to that ancient In-
 ‘ tegrity, which *Jesus Christ* by his Word
 ‘ requireth, they began to controul the Mi-
 ‘ nisters of the Gospel, for attributing so
 ‘ much Force and Virtue unto the Scriptures
 ‘ of God *read*; whereas the Truth was, that
 ‘ when the Word is said to engender Faith
 ‘ in the Heart, and to convert the Soul of
 ‘ Man, or to work any such spiritual divine
 ‘ Effect, these Speeches are not thereunto ap-
 ‘ plicable, as it is *read* or *preached*, but as it
 ‘ is engrafted in us by the Power of the *Holy*
 ‘ *Ghost*, opening the Eyes of our Under-
 ‘ standing, and so revealing the Mysteries of
 ‘ God according to that which *Jeremy* pro-
 ‘ mised

‘ mised before should be, saying, *I will put*
‘ *my Law in their inward Parts, and I will*
‘ *write it in their Hearts.* The Book of
‘ God they notwithstanding for the most
‘ part so admired, that other Disputation a-
‘ gainst their Opinions than only by Allega-
‘ tion of *Scripture* they would not hear be-
‘ sides it, they thought no other Writings in
‘ the World should be studied; insomuch,
‘ as one of their great Prophets exhorting
‘ them to cast away all Respects unto *hu-*
‘ *man* Writings, so far to his Notion they
‘ condescended, that as many as had any
‘ Books save the *Holy Bible* in their Custody,
‘ they brought and set them publickly on
‘ fire. When they and their Bibles were
‘ alone together, what strange fantastical O-
‘ pinion soever at any time entered into their
‘ Heads, their Use was to think the *Spirit*
‘ taught it them. And forasmuch as they
‘ were of the same Suit with those of whom
‘ the *Apostle* speaketh, saying, *They are still*
‘ *learning, but never attain to the Knowledge*
‘ *of Truth,* it was no marvel to see them
‘ every Day broach some new Thing, not
‘ heard of before, which restless Levity they
‘ did interpret to be their *growing to spiritual*
‘ *Perfection,* and a *proceeding from Faith to*
‘ *Faith.*

‘ *Faith*. The Differences amongst them
‘ grew by this means in a manner infinite;
‘ so that scarcely was there found any one of
‘ them, the forge of whose Brain was not pos-
‘ sessed with some special Mystery. Where-
‘ upon altho’ their mutual Contentions were
‘ most fiercely prosecuted amongst them-
‘ selves, yet when they came to defend the
‘ Cause common to them all against the Ad-
‘ versaries of their Faction, they had Ways
‘ to lick one another whole, the Founder in
‘ his own Persuasion excusing *the dear Bre-*
‘ *thren*, which were not so far enlighten’d,
‘ and professing a charitable Hope of the
‘ Mercy of God towards them, notwith-
‘ standing their swerving from him in some
‘ Things. Their own Ministers they highly
‘ magnified, as Men whose Vocation was
‘ from God; the rest their manner was to
‘ term disdainfully *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, to
‘ account their calling an *human Creature*,
‘ and to *detain the People as much as might be*
‘ *from bearing them*. These Men at the first
‘ were only pitied in their Error, and not
‘ much withstood by any; the great Humi-
‘ lity, Zeal, and Devotion which appeared
‘ to be in them, was in all Men’s Opinion a
‘ Pledge of their harmless Meaning. The
hardest

' hardest that Men of sound Understanding
 ' conceived of them, was but this, *O quam*
 ' *honestâ voluntate miseri errant?* with how
 ' good a Meaning these poor Souls do Evil?
 ' *Lutber* made Request unto *Frederick*,
 ' *Duke of Saxony*, that within his Domi-
 ' nion they might be favourably dealt with
 ' and spared, for that (their Error exemp-
 ' ted) they seemed otherwise right good
 ' Men. By Means of which merciful
 ' Toleration they gathered Strength, much
 ' more than was safe for the State of the
 ' Common-Wealth, wherein they lived.
 ' They had their secret Corners, Meetings
 ' and Assemblies in the Night, the People
 ' flocked unto them by Thousands. The
 ' Means whereby they both allured and re-
 ' tained so great Multitudes, were most ef-
 ' fectual: First, a wonderful shew of
 ' Zeal towards God, wherewith they seem-
 ' ed to be wrapp'd in every thing they
 ' spake; Secondly, an Hatred of Sin, and
 ' a singular Love of Integrity, which Men
 ' did think to be much more thanordi-
 ' nary in them, by reason of the Custom
 ' which they had to fill the Ears of the
 ' People with Invectives against their autho-
 ' rized Guides, as well Spiritual as Civil:
 Thirdly,

‘ Thirdly, the bountiful Relief wherewith
 ‘ they eased the broken Estate of such needy
 ‘ Creatures, as were in that Respect the
 ‘ more apt to be drawn away: Fourth-
 ‘ ly, a tender Compassion which they were
 ‘ thought to take upon the Miseries of the
 ‘ common Sort, over whose Heads their
 ‘ manner was even to pour down Showers
 ‘ of Tears in Complaining, that no Respect
 ‘ was had unto them, that their Goods
 ‘ were devoured by wicked Cormorants,
 ‘ their Persons had in contempt, all Liberty,
 ‘ both Spiritual and Temporal, taken from
 ‘ them, that it was high time for God now
 ‘ to hear their Groans, and to send them
 ‘ Deliverance: Lastly, a cunning Slight
 ‘ which they had to stroke and smooth up
 ‘ the Minds of their Followers, as well by
 ‘ appropriating unto them all the favourable
 ‘ Titles, the good Words, and the gracious
 ‘ Promises in Scripture; as also by casting
 ‘ the contrary always on the Heads of such
 ‘ as were severed from that Retinue. Where-
 ‘ upon the People’s common Acclamation
 ‘ unto such Deceivers was; *these are verily*
 ‘ *the Men of God, these are his true and sincere*
 ‘ *Prophets.*—Now whatsoever they did col-
 ‘ lect out of Scripture, when they came to
 ‘ justify

‘ justify or persuade it unto others, all was
‘ the heavenly Father’s Appointment, his
‘ Commandment, his Will and Charge.
‘ Which Thing is the very Point in regard
‘ whereof I have gather’d this Declaration.
‘ For my Purpose herein is to shew, that
‘ when the Minds of Men are once erro-
‘ neously persuaded, that it is the Will of
‘ God to have those Things done which
‘ they *fancy*; then *Opinions* are as Thorns
‘ in their Sides, never suffering them to take
‘ rest, till they have brought their Specula-
‘ tions into practice. The Lets and Impe-
‘ diments of which Practice, their restless
‘ Desire and Study to remove, leadeth them
‘ every Day forth by the Hand into the
‘ other more dangerous Opinions, some-
‘ times quite and clean contrary to their
‘ first pretended Meanings. So as what
‘ will grow out of such Errors as go masked
‘ under the Cloak of divine Authority, im-
‘ possible it is that ever the Wit of Man
‘ should imagine, till Time have brought
‘ forth the Fruits of them; for which Cause
‘ it behoveth Wisdom to fear the Sequels
‘ thereof, even beyond all apparent Cause
‘ of Fear. *That Things doubtful are to be*
‘ *construed in the better Part* is a Principle
‘ not

' not safe to be followed in Matters con-
 ' cerning the Public State of a Common-
 ' weal, but howsoever these and the like
 ' Speeches be accounted as Arrows idly shot
 ' at Random without either Eye had to any
 ' Mark, or Regard to their Lighting-Place;
 ' hath not your longing Desire for the Pra-
 ' ctice of your Discipline brought the Mat-
 ' ter already unto this Demurrer amongst
 ' you; whether the People and their Godly
 ' Pastors, that way affected, ought not to
 ' make *Separation* from the rest, and to
 ' begin the Exercise of Discipline, without
 ' the Licence of Civil Powers, which Li-
 ' cence they have sought for, and are not
 ' heard? Upon which Question as ye have
 ' now divided your selves, the warier sort of
 ' you take the one Part, and the forwarder
 ' in Zeal the other.

' O merciful God, what Man's Wit is
 ' there able to sound the Depth of those
 ' dangerous and fearful Evils, whereunto
 ' our weak and impotent Nature is inclina-
 ' ble to sink it self, rather than to shew an
 ' Acknowledgment of Error in that which
 ' once we have unadvisedly taken upon us
 ' to defend, against the Stream as it were
 ' of a contrary publick Resolution! where-
 ' fore,

‘ fore, if we any thing respect their Error,
 ‘ who being persuaded, even as ye are, have
 ‘ gone further upon that Persuasion than ye
 ‘ allow — there is — most just Cause to
 ‘ fear, lest our hastiness to embrace a thing
 ‘ of so perilous a Consequence should cause
 ‘ Posterity to feel those Evils, which as yet
 ‘ are more easy for us to prevent, than they
 ‘ would be for them to remedy.’

On last *Sunday* our new *Methodists* discover’d a more violent Temper than is consistent with their great Pretensions to *Meekness* and *Sanctity*. The Story is as follows, and as it was related to me by the Gentleman who read Prayers. ‘ At St. MARGARET’S WESTMINSTER, there is
 ‘ a *Society* Evening Lecture, and when the
 ‘ *Reader* came he found in the *Church-Yard*, at the *West-Door*, a number of People singing Psalms. When he got into the
 ‘ *Church* he was affronted by some unknown Persons, as he pass’d thro’ a great
 ‘ Crowd to the *Vestry*. As soon as the Clergyman appointed to *preach* came, he was
 ‘ *solicited* (if an *over-bearing Importunity* may be so call’d) to resign the Pulpit to
 ‘ Mr. *Whitfield*, who (as is supposed by his
 ‘ not

' not appearing at the *Prayers*) was wait-
 ' ing at some neighbouring House to know
 ' the Issue of their Application. But the
 ' *Preacher* continuing as determin'd to do
 ' his own Duty, as Mr. *Whitfield* was to do
 ' it for him, they at last effected that by
 ' *Force* which they could not gain by *Trea-*
 ' *ty*. So the *Preacher* was safely confined
 ' in his *Pew*, which was lock'd, (the *Sexton*
 ' being appointed by the *Society* and in Mr.
 ' *Whitfield's* Interest) and guarded by sever-
 ' al lusty Fellows, while another Party
 ' convey'd the *unlicenc'd Intruder* trium-
 ' phantly up into the *Pulpit*, and kept Cen-
 ' try on the Stairs for fear he should be taken
 ' down in as forceable a Manner as he got
 ' in. If this Conduct were suggested by the
 ' *Spirit*, it must be the Spirit of *Confusion*
 ' and *Disorder*, not of *Peace*.' This Story
 being told me I had the Curiosity to go with
 a Friend to the *Reader*, who confirmed to
 us the Truth of it.

There are many Instances, too well at-
 tested to leave me Room for any Doubt con-
 cerning the Truth of them, of these *unautho-*
rized Teachers using *fraudulent* and *unfair*
 Means of getting into Pulpits against the In-
 clination and Consent of the *proper Ministers*,

or

or *appointed Preachers*. One of them I can attest upon my *own Knowledge*, because it was *attempted upon myself* by some of Mr. *W's* Followers, who *knew* that I would not grant *him* the Pulpit upon any Terms; and that is by asking the Pulpit for a *Friend*, and then sending Mr. *W.* or some other *Metho-dist*. This Method, I am credibly informed, has been several Times practised. Another has been, by stepping up into the Pulpit, as soon as the Prayers are over, without asking any leave at all. And all these *Disorders*, *Irregularities*, and *Artifices* are practiced by Persons who have no *Warrant* but their *pretended Call from Heaven*, to preach in *any* Church in the Diocese. I thought it not improper to mention these Particulars, that the *Clergy* may be upon their Guard.

Feb. 10. 1738-9.

Yours, &c.



A
S E R M O N

Preached before

The RIGHT HONOURABLE the
L O R D - M A Y O R,

A N D
A L D E R M E N,

I N T H E
Cathedral Church of St. PAUL's,
London,

On *Monday, January 30, 1737.*

Being the Day appointed to be observed as the
Day of the Martyrdom of King CHARLES I.

T

Barnard, *Mayor.*

Tuesday the 31st Day of January,
1737, and in the Eleventh Year
of the Reign of King GEORGE
the Second, of Great-Britain, &c.

IT is Ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Rev. Mr. *Venn*, for his Sermon preached before this Court, and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul* Yesterday, being the Anniversary Fast for the Martyrdom of K. *Charles* the First; and that he be desired to print the same.

M A N.



To the RIGHT HONOURABLE
 Sir *John Barnard*, Knt.
 LORD - M A Y O R
 O F T H E
 City of L O N D O N.

My LORD,

WHEN the Governors of our two
famous Universities thought them-
 selves obliged, in Duty and Gra-
 titude, to return your Lordship
 Thanks for that eminent Assistance which
 they received from your uncommon Pru-
 T 2 dence

dence, Courage, and Eloquence, in a late Time of Trial, the World thought they acted *Wisely* as well as *Justly*, in paying their Compliments to a Gentleman that had *not* been educated within their Walls. For, as 'tis more natural for those who were brought up in our Colleges, to have a Fondness for the Places where they enjoyed so much Satisfaction, and received so much Benefit, so, to be distinguished by those who are not under the same Ties and Obligations, is a Mark of greater Honour. The former is like the filial Affection of Children for their Parents; the other, a deliberate Regard arising purely from an Opinion of their Usefulness to the Publick.

How many *Acknowledgments* you have received from other Men, or Bodies of Men, it is not my Intention here to recount; I will only say (without the Fear of being thought a false Prophet) that *many more* are likely to be added to their Number.

AMONG

AMONG the rest, it would be strange if the *Clergy of the City of London*, should be unmindful of any Opportunity to express their just Sense both of your private Character as a *Christian*, and your publick one as a *Magistrate*; in both which, I wish you had so many Equals, that it would be impossible to observe any Thing singular or peculiar in your Behaviour.

THE Poor and Helpless will always remember who was their Friend and Protector, under whose Administration Justice was in a *new manner expedited* in Publick, as well as who sate whole Days at Home to relieve the Complaints of the Injured, and defend the Cause of such as are falsely accused. One Effect of this constant and uninterrupted Course of Justice must not be forgotten, *viz.* That it will prevent the Young and Rash (who have, it may be, just enter'd upon a Course of Vice) from being confined to the Lewd and Vicious Company they too usually meet with

in Prisons, where they are harden'd in those Practices, from which they might otherwise have been reclaimed.

BUT what above all Things becomes me, as a Minister of the Gospel, to take notice of, is the Revival of those Laws and Orders, that may in some Measure tend to restore the due Observation of the Lord's Day. To prevent Barbers and others from exercising their Employments, and to prohibit Publick Houses from giving Refuge to the Idle and the Debauched, are two material Articles in so good a Work. To the *untinking* Part of Mankind these may seem *small* Matters, scarce worthy the Attention of a *great Genius*; but whoever reflects that the general Relaxation of all Discipline, and the monstrous Diffoluteness of Manners which now reigns among us, was at first owing to the Neglect of Publick Worship upon this Day, will judge that you have *judiciously* struck at the Root of our Corruption. I have heard some eminent Citizens declare, that within their Memory,

mory, no body could on a *Sunday* pass the City-Gates without *Enquiry*: And though it would be extreamly difficult to re-affert such a Piece of Discipline, it is for that Reason the more *necessary*, and would therefore be the more *glorious*. Our Times are grown so *very* bad, that I am afraid, all *common Remedies* have lost their Operation and Effect.

I WILL not enter into your Character as a Member of the *House of Commons*, nor mention your watchful Care of *Trade*, and your constant Endeavours to lessen the *Publick Debt*: The *Annals* of your Country will be the fittest Place to register that Part of your Conduct.

My Lord,

A POST or Title has never been of great Estimation in my Eyes, unless it was accompanied with correspondent Merit. I say this upon my own Account, and not on yours: For, to have dedicated a Sermon

D E D I C A T I O N.

to you, because you happened to be *Lord-Mayor*, would be a Cause unworthy of your *Character*, that can suggest so many better Reasons; and had I no *other* Inducement, but *only* that I was desired to preach before your Lordship on this Occasion, I believe you would scarce have been troubled with this Address from

Your Lordship's

Most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

RICHARD VENN.



Wisdom of Solomon, CH. iii. VER. 4.

For, though they be punished in the sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.

TH E Author of this Piece is not, indeed, to be rank'd in the Class of inspir'd Writers; but this we may justly say of him, and of the following Book, composed by the Son of *Syrach*, that they exceed any Thing which the Wit of *Greece* or *Rome* ever produced, whether we consider the Dignity of the moral Sentiments, or the Beauties of Imagination, that every where display themselves in the Expression.

But no where does this *Second Solomon* appear more rais'd above himself, than when he is looking with Pity and Contempt on all that Happiness and Greatness which wicked Men enjoy; than while he is encouraging the Virtuous to persevere with Chearfulness and Resolution in their State of Trial, and proposing to their View that *glorious Immortality*,

*tal*ity, which will attend their pious Sufferings.

And in these Topics the *Critics* suspect no Addition in the Text, who in some other Places imagine the *Greek* Copy has refined upon the *Original*. Out of many Instances to this Purpose, I have pitched upon one taken out of the third *Chap*. “The Souls of
“the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and
“there shall no Torment touch them. In
“the Sight of the Unwise they seem’d to die,
“and their Departure is taken for Misery,
“and their going from us to be utter Destruction: But they are in Peace. For,
“&c.”

The *Public Service* for this mournful, never-to-be-forgotten Day, on which we commemorate the *Heroic* Sufferings of the *Royal Martyr*, has applied the last Verse of this Quotation to *His* particular Case, by changing the Plural Number into the Singular; and I shall beg leave to imitate the Example of our Church in the following Discourse; wherein I shall endeavour,

First, To shew what Reasons we have to conceive Hopes full of Immortality, from the virtuous Sufferings of the Righteous: *Tho’ they be*, &c.

Secondly,

Secondly, What Grounds the PIOUS KING had to support himself from *this* Consideration: And then,

Thirdly, Conclude with some practical Observations.

It has been the Policy of some, who believed no *Future State*, but did not think it convenient openly to declare themselves (such was the *Modesty* of former Times) to take a more *indirect* Method of accomplishing their End, and *compliment* us out of those religious Principles which they now openly *attack* and *ridicule*. They would persuade us, that *Fear* and *Hope* are by no means proper Motives to Religion. They would teach us more exalted and elevated Notions of adhering to Virtue for *Virtue's sake*; of being influenc'd by contemplating the internal Beauty, Order, and Propriety there is in doing what is just and becoming; and, that they may more effectually secure us to be of *their* Party, they pretend to be of *ours*, and have recourse to the Sacred Writings for such Passages, relating to Faith and the Love of God, as may most plausibly serve their Purposes. Thus, by mixing misapplied Scripture with false Reasoning, they would reduce us from the *rational* Hopes and Fears of Christians,

to

to the vain and empty Notions of *Stoicism*, which were never fit for any other Use than to be talk'd of. For, not to mention that these sublime and airy Speculations are perfectly unintelligible by, and consequently useless to the Bulk of Mankind, (who are all equally concerned in the *Essentials* of Religion) they are inconsistent with the present State of human Nature. I confess the Mind does perceive a natural Beauty and Comeliness in acting agreeably to the Dictates of right Reason, and every rational Being feels a Pleasure from reflecting that it has proceeded according to *this* Standard; which Pleasure is a Motive to engage it in such a Conduct. But then the Mind, which is to be thus influenced, ought to be at liberty to view this beautiful Order of Things, and to enjoy the Contemplation, disengaged from the more alluring, because nearer Inticements that offer themselves from another Quarter, and undisturbed by those present Pains or approaching Difficulties, which quite take her off from the composed Prospect of that Scene, which can *only* affect us when we are at leisure calmly and securely to view it. This soft and still Voice of *Nature*, like that still Voice of *God*, which was
not

not heard during the Continuance of the Thunderings and Lightnings, can never be *constantly* and *effectually* attended to among the Tumults and Misfortunes of this World. The Fault does not lie on the Side of *Virtue*, nor is it any Blemish cast on *that* which is, *in it self*, sufficiently fit to recommend it self to a Rational Being; but it is owing to the Weakness of Mankind, who are not perfect enough in this frail Condition of Mortality, to be drawn by the Beauty of *that alone* without some other Assistance. GOD, indeed, is on all Accounts able to direct himself after this Manner; and the Pleasure, which *Angels* find in acting rightly, is a Reward for, and may therefore be a Motive of their acting so. And so it may be with *us*, when we become *Angels*; but the way to be so, is to possess our Minds with such a thorough Sense of God's Judgments, that we may take Care never to incur his fierce Displeasure. However true this is, some of our incautious Brethren, whose warm Temper suggests to them high and extravagant Flights concerning *Faith* and the *Love of God*, have suffer'd their Enemies, who meant neither them nor Religion any Service, to draw them off from this
grand

grand Security of a Religious Life, under the Notion of its being a *flavish Fear*, and that *perfect Love* excludes *Fear*. But we have not so learned *Christ*, who advises us to *fear God*, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast both Soul and Body into Hell Fire; for tho' Love is the Perfection of Religion, yet a just Fear of displeasing God, and falling under his Indignation is both the first Beginner and the best Preserver of it. I might add farther, that the *Fear* mentioned in the Text alluded to, which is excluded by *perfect Love*, is the Fear of suffering upon the account of Religion, and so does not at all relate to their Purpose who quote it. It appears then that the only sure Basis and fast Foundation whereon to build a sincere Obedience is the Belief of another World; and if there be no other sufficient Security of Virtue, *This* must be admitted, or there are no Laws of Nature which can command our Obedience. But, since the latter Assertion is seldom *openly* denied, tho' it may sometimes *secretly* be disbelieved, and a professed Discussion of that Point would lead me too far for a Discourse at this Time, I shall presume at present to take it for granted, that there are some Duties

Duties which Men are obliged to follow; and from thence infer the Necessity of another Life; on the Belief of which (whether derived from *Tradition* as the most general Way, or sometimes collected in some degree by *Reason*, or plainly discovered by *Revelation*) all the Virtue in the World in *fact* has, and necessarily ever *must* subsist. Now the *Necessity* of this Article clearly infers the *Truth* of it; as may be manifested from the following Considerations. The only Motive, which can induce a *Reasonable* Being to act, is its own *Happiness*; for the *Pleasure* we take in the most abstracted Acts of Virtue is the *Sanction* that engages us in the Pursuit of them, and by this *Philosophic Selfishness* we really get above even what the World vulgarly calls *Selfishness*; meaning thereby some present sensual Gratification, in opposition to our true Happiness upon the *whole*. To prescribe Laws without adding a sufficient Sanction to oblige a reasonable Being to observe them, would be a Weakness incompatible to an all-wise Being. But what sufficient Motives have we to resign the chief Pleasures of this Life, and *plunge* ourselves into great Difficulties and Misfortunes in pursuance of the
severer

A SERMON preached before

severer Rules of rigid Virtue, if we were to have no Compensation hereafter, for what we are ready to forgo here? On the other hand, what Restraint have we to preserve us from complying with any seasonable Villany, that either the *Law* does not reach, or the *Multitude* of Offenders makes reputable; and by which we may secure to our selves easy Circumstances, and avoid great Inconveniencies, did not our well-grounded Apprehensions of a *future State* persuade us, that it's better, much better to endure a light Affliction for a Moment, than to drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, that is pour'd out without Mixture into the Cup of his Indignation? If therefore he that wills the *End*, wills also the *Means* to that End, and the *only Means* that can enforce a just Obedience to God's Laws is the *Expectation of a future State*, God must as necessarily have *designed* a *future State*, as he has *designed* his own Laws to be observed. There can no *Obligation* therefore be laid upon us to act contrary to our *Happiness*, for that would be an *Obligation* to act contrary to the *only Motive* of Action, which would be a Contradiction.

But

But there are by the first Concession some Religious *Obligations* laid upon us ; to say therefore, that *they* ever *absolutely* destroy our Happiness, is to say there are no Religious *Obligations* laid upon us, which also is a *Contradiction*. The Observance of Religious *Obligations* does sometimes destroy our Happiness *in this World*, therefore there is another State, in which Matters are to be adjusted, because otherwise the fore-said Observances would *absolutely* destroy our Happiness ; which would be to say there were no Religious *Obligations* laid upon us, contrary to what before was granted ; there must be therefore a future State, *ubi bonis bene & malis male erit*. This I take to be a *strict Proof* from the Principles which a *sober Deist* will himself allow, if *there be any* of that Species of Men left among us, who have not lately made farther Advances. This Argument then may be allowed to conclude, as far as it goes.

But the Objection to it will be, that it's only a *partial* Argument, that it only proves a future State for the *unfortunately Virtuous in this Life* ; for, tho' nothing can engage us to Action but our *own Happiness*, yet it has been granted that there is a Pleasure arising to an undebauched Mind from ha-

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ving acted agreeably to *right Reason*, which Pleasure is a *Motive* to such Conduct. After this manner we suppose *Angels* may in part direct themselves by Parity of Reason; therefore *some* in this World may have sufficient Motives to observe *Religious Obligations*, while it does not destroy their Happiness; which is the Case of some Men here, for whom no *future Life* may be appointed; and as for the Wicked, God may forgive them, *as he pleases*: the *unhappy Virtuous*, therefore, can only expect a future State. Thus stands the Objection. To which I answer, God has prescribed all his Rational Creatures Laws, or given *Rules* or *Directions* for their Practice, attended with *Sanctions*, adequate to their Circumstances. By the *Sanction* of the Law I mean the *Motive* that engages us to observe it, *viz.* in general our *own Happiness*. In this Sense there neither is, nor can be any Law without a *Sanction*; for when we say there may be *human Laws* without a *Sanction*, we only mean an *human Sanction*, not absolutely without any at all, for that would be a Contradiction, since a *Sanction* and a *Direction* compleat the whole Idea of a *Law*. A *Motive absolutely* inadequate to our present Condition or Circumstances is in a *moral* Sense

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no Motive at all. A Motive, which, (considering the Weakness and Temptations human Nature is subject to) is only fit to work upon such finer Spirits as will be drawn by the abstracted Beauty of Truth and Virtue, but is inadequate to engage Mankind in general in the Observance of the Religious Obligations; or which, tho' it is *barely possible* it *might* have some Effect, would yet represent God as extremely *hard* and *rigorous* to expect *much* Effect from it; *That* Sanction, I say, cannot be the Sanction that is chosen by a *Wise, Merciful, and Good* God. But yet God has laid all Mankind in general under Religious Obligations; and there is no Sanction to enforce them, but either the abstract Sense of *their Propriety*, or the *certain Expectation* of a *future State*; and the *former* is inadequate to come either from *God*, or to *us*, therefore the *latter* must be the *Sanction*. There is then a *general* future State, such as is sufficient to deter us from Vice and gain us to the Side of Virtue, or God gives us Reason to believe an Error, and on that *necessary* Error founds our Obedience to his Laws; which to say, is most absurd, and the contrary therefore must be true. It may be added, that (prone as we are to Vice and Indolence, and taken

up as we are with every trifling Amusement, and carried away with every idle Custom) we should never think *long* and *seriously* enough on *Right* and *Wrong*, to form any *strong* Habit of Virtue by that means, except the Apprehensions of God's future Judgment had *first* created that Habit in us: That Apprehension then was *at first* necessary to make the other Sanction take Effect, *where it does*; so that a future State, we see, is sometimes the *only Parent* of Virtue, but always its *Nurse, Ally, and Assistant*.

Thus far *Reason* may carry us: But when we come to consider what will be the Fate of great and notorious Sinners, Men who *deliberately* violate the Injunctions of their Maker, by Crimes of Consequence and Importance, *here* I doubt, we shall be at a loss, from whence *Reason* cannot recover us; we know in general, that it shall be well with the Good, and bad for the Wicked, because that Belief is *absolutely* necessary for our Obedience; and whatever is *absolutely* necessary, is, and *therefore* is true. *

But

* From this Principle, (*viz.* that whatever is *absolutely* necessary, is, and *therefore* is true, which is itself deducible from the Attributes of God, and from whence at present we are endeavouring to prove a future State) we may infer *also* the Truth of Christianity. For, if some Religion be necessary for Man, consider'd as a moral and social Animal, and
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But whether God will re-admit such Offenders to his Favour on their *Repentance*, is what *Philosophy* is too weak to assure us of. This however is clear, that there is no Medium whereby we can shew the Connection between *Repentance* and *Acceptance*. Our Penitence may render us not *positively fit* (as some would have it) for Forgiveness, but rather, not *unfit* to receive God's Favour, when his *Wisdom* sees any proper ex-

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if Natural Religion be *incompetent* for those Ends and purposes, it follows that there must be *some* Revelation; if there *must* be some Revelation, there *has* been one, which is either what we are in the present Possession of, derived to us from the *Jews*, received by them from the Patriarchs, dispersed at first among all Nations of the Earth, and (whatever *other* Alterations it may have suffer'd) still more or less pointing at the grand article of *reconciling God to Sinners*; or, it must be some *other* Revelation. But if *Christianity* be compared with every other Revelation, that is, or has been ever received among Men, we may leave it to the Discretion of every Reader to make the Determination. To this nothing can be replied, but either that *no* Revelation is *necessary*, or tho' it *be*, that *God* hath not provided any. The former part of which Reply is contrary to *Fact*, to the *Experience* of all Nations, and to *Universal History*; it being evident, that as there never was a People but what lived under the Sense of *some Religion*, so there never was a People but what ow'd their Sense of Religion to *some Revelation*, corrupted or incorrupted, but never by them at first *totally* contrived and invented. The latter Part is equally contrary to *Reason*, as representing God so defective in his Care and Providence, that, tho' he created Man a social and moral Being, yet he had left it impossible for him to exert that Character, had it not been for the Assistance of a *solemn Lye* or *false Revelation*, which did not grow to be *accidentally* convenient, but was at first *absolutely* necessary for Man to appear in his Practice to *be what he was* in Principle.

trinsic Cause to grant it; which *Cause* is the formal Reason of the Grant, not any procuring *Merit* in the Nature of Repentance; which can only remove any Impediments to the Operations of God's Wisdom and Mercy: Those two Attributes always jointly act together, his *Mercy* disposing him to dispense all the Favour *that*, and no Favour but *what*, his *Wisdom* dictates to be proper on the *whole*; from whence it follows, that, as it is impossible for us to be adequate Judges of his *Wisdom*, it must be equally impossible to be Judges of his *Mercy*. His *Justice* is a fix'd unvariable Attribute, from whence we may *always* and *infallibly* argue. As to the rest, 'tis safer to proceed *Negatively*, and say such a Thing cannot proceed from God, because it is clearly *contrary* to his *Goodness* or his *Wisdom*, than venture to assert that his *Goodness* and his *Wisdom* demand such or such Things in Question. For, tho' we understand enough of the Attributes of *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, to be able to know that *some* Things are *not* agreeable to them, yet, as those Attributes are *Infinite*, and *Goodness* is always *restrained*, as to *particular* Acts, by *Wisdom*, we cannot say how *MUCH* *Goodness* God in his *Wisdom* is obliged to shew

The common Sense of Mankind is evidently on this Side; for we see all Nations often denying Remission to penitent Criminals; and tho' such Executions do actually result from *Reasons of Government*, (as they may do with GOD also) yet *Justice* is allowed here to approve the Conduct that *Prudence* does suggest, which would be impossible if Penitence had any *Natural Right* to Remission of Sins; for then Pardon would never be an Act of *Grace*, but always a Claim of *Right*. This Account we find agreeable to the *Jewish* and *Christian* Scheme, where we are re-intituled to God's Grace and Favour, not by vertue of *our Repentance*, but by the Merits of *Jesus Christ*; and where Repentance is only a *Duty* of the new Covenant, not the *Cause* of our Restoration and Redemption. Without the Help of this REVELATION, natural Religion would have appeared all over Dark, Dismal, and Uncertain: Fit for nobody but Men of Learning and Leisure, and of little Use even to them, when they most wanted its Assistance. 'Tis the *Bible* ONLY that can clear up these Difficulties; from *thence only* can we draw Comfort and Satisfaction, and have our Hopes full of Immortality, while we are punished in the

Sight of Men. This Book our afflicted *Sovereign* told us, he chiefly consulted in his unparallel'd Misfortunes; and this he, Dying, recommended to his Children as the great Support under all Calamities. This leads me to show, *Secondly*,

What Grounds the Martyr of this Day had to support him under all his Sufferings. Yet is their Hope full of Immortality.

The Text tells us, that the Righteous are sometimes punish'd in the Sight of Men, *therefore* is their Hope full of Immortality. That *He* was punished in the Sight of Men, was manifest even to the Astonishment of all *Foreign* Countries, as well as to the Everlasting Scandal of *our own*; that he was a *righteous* Man, will appear to any who shall impartially examine his whole Behaviour: For, if we view him in his three-fold Capacity, as a *Man*, a *Christian*, and a *Prince*, we shall have Reason to conclude that He exceeded all other Kings that ever *did*, or probably ever *will* sit upon a Throne. I know not why we do *by Custom* divide a Character, which in him was always one and uniform. “ For, besides the Blessings
“ which personal Virtues may draw down
“ from Heaven, it was an inestimable Loss,
“ which the Nation then underwent, when
“ it

“ it was deprived of a Prince, whose Ex-
 “ ample would have had a greater Influence
 “ upon the Manners and Piety of the Na-
 “ tion, than the strictest Laws can have.”
Panegyric can do *Him* no Service, and that
 History which shall do him *Justice*, will
 do his Memory the greatest *Honour*. I can-
 not express myself better, than in the
 Words of a *noble Apologist* who knew him
 well, and vindicated his Character abroad,
 in the Time of his highest Distress. “ The
 “ King, says he, * had no Vice to make
 “ him terrible or odious to his Subjects;
 “ he was known to be a Prince of a most
 “ Pious Life, constant and exemplary
 “ in the Practice of all Acts of Devotion;
 “ no Blood had been drawn by his Anger
 “ or Revenge; no Noble Family dis-
 “ honoured by his Lust; no Debauchery
 “ or Excess had received Encouragement
 “ by his Example; no Oaths or Profane-
 “ ness had ever been heard to come out
 “ of his Mouth. His Prudence, Abilities,
 “ invincible Courage and Industry were
 “ known to his fiercest Enemies, who had
 “ likewise seen his Patience and Compos-
 “ ness of Mind, in the highest Afflictions
 “ and Wrongs, that had ever almost be-
 “ fallen

* The Earl of *Bristol*

“ fallen any King, as well as his Good-
 “ nefs and Clemency, in defiring to bury
 “ all paff Injuries in perpetual Oblivion.”
 I muft add, that his Love of *Truth* and his
Faithfulnefs to his Promifes, were fo punc-
 tual and exact, that, when he might have faved
 his Life by making his Escape from his cruel
 Enemies, he refufed the Offer, becaufe he
 had pawn’d his *Honour* to the contrary.
 His Care of *Religion* was fo ftrict, that his
 Death was chiefly owing to his Conftancy
 in maintaining what he thought belong’d
 to its Purity and Integrity. “ All other
 “ Things, * fays *He*, at any Time pro-
 “ pounded were either impertinent as to
 “ any Ground of War, or eafily granted
 “ by me, and only to make up a Number,
 “ or elfe they were merely consequential
 “ and acceffary, after the War was by them
 “ unjuftly begun.” I am fenfible that in
 thefe Days, this will by many be deem’d
 a Cause highly unworthy of a Prince to die
 for; but yet I will be bold to affert, that
 if Religion *be* true, it is the *nobleft* Cause
 that the *greateft* King can ever facrifice his
 Life for. Were there then no Faults in his
 Reign? I dare not affirm that *even of him*,
 nor is there *any* Reign in Hiftory not liable
 even

* Εἰκὼν βασιλευς.

even to just Objections. Doubtless there *were* several Mismanagements, which his own Necessities at Home, and the Defence of the *Protestant Religion* Abroad led him into; but NOTHING that could justify a *Civil War*, NOTHING but what the People had ample Amends for, *before* that Civil War broke out: Infomuch, that it is justly observ'd that the *Liberty of England* owes more to *his* Grants, than to the Concessions of all his Predecessors from the Conquest. What then could Occasion that bloody Quarrel, in which 100,000 of our Countrymen lost their Lives? Surely it could not be said, that when once a warm and disagreeable Opposition was begun, there could be no possible Reconciliation or Forgiveness. If the *solemn Oaths* of a Man, remarkable for the tenderest Sense of *Truth* and *Piety*, were not sufficient, He had placed the *fullest* Security in their own Hands: He had *disabled* himself from ever wrecking his Resentment and Revenge. And certainly, however it might be abroad under *Foreign Governments*, this way of reasoning is too injurious to the *Honour of Parliaments* to be admitted by any *Englishman*. In the Dominions of *Absolute* and *Arbitrary* Monarchs, when their People are oppressed beyond what they
can

can or will bear, they have no Remedy but to destroy their Prince. But *our* excellent Constitution has better provided for our Security. On such Occasions our *Representatives* can stand between the *People* and the *King*; and if they manage with Temper, Steadiness and Prudence, first or last they *must* and *will* be heard. And to suppose all that they can do, when they have done all they did desire, will not give us any Satisfaction, is to declare the Uselessness, and disgrace the Character of that Body which guards our Liberties. It would have been happy for the Nation if this *unbloody* Method of *Reforming* the Government, had been preferr'd. However true it might be that the King, animated by the best Intentions, and at the same Time press'd with the greatest Difficulties, (which the Rebels themselves had at first designedly drawn him into,) might have too much Recourse to his Prerogative, and in some Cases deviate from the common Course of Law, (which yet was not certain, perhaps, in all the Instances complain'd of; especially if we form our Judgment upon the Constitution, as it stood *then*, and not as it stands *now*) yet that did not empower the *People* to take his Life for the *Forfeiture*, or invest his *Subjects* with

with a Jurisdiction to *try* their *Sovereign*. A Crime so monstrous and so hateful to God and Man justly brought our Country into the greatest Contempt abroad, and into infinite Distractions at home; and laid the Foundation, perhaps of every signal Calamity, which has since befallen the Nation, and which may be traced up to this horrid Murther, as its natural Source and Fountain. Every *Law* is a Limitation of the *Royal Power*; but every *Limitation* is not a Condition, tho' every Condition be a *Limitation*. This appears *so far* to be still the Sense of our present Settlement under the *Illustrious House of Hanover*, where tho' there were several wise *Provisions* and *Restrictions* appointed, there were but two *Conditions* inserted; nor are we by that Act absolv'd from our Allegiance, unless our Monarchs turn *Papists* themselves, or *marry* *Papists*. The *Majestas Populi* may be allowed at *Rome* or any other *Democracy*, but in any *Monarchy*, absolute or limited (which is not *essentially* the less a *real* Monarchy, because it is *limited*) it is as great an Absurdity in Idea, as it is in Language. All Government implies a *Trust* of some Sort or other, not always a *Trust revocable at Pleasure* (as it is in the Deputies of a Common-Wealth) but often

often such only *ceases of it self* when the Prince by a *natural* or *moral* Disability can no longer fulfil the necessary Terms of that Relation. I meddle not with *extraordinary* Cases, where the Governour intends to *alienate* the Kingdom from HIMSELF, or himself from the *Kingdom*; where he may design to extirpate a whole Party of his Subjects (which was pretended to be the Ground of the *Irish* Rebellion, though the Extirpation was really promoted by other Hands,) or where he may defeat the great and most important Purposes, for which Government was first instituted by God. All that I insist upon, is, that the People neither have, nor can have any Right in a *Monarchy* to call their Sovereigns to account, and make them stand cognizable before their Tribunal for Faults and Mismanagements in the Administration.

But, to return: If I have fairly stated and represented the Case; if the People had no such Power as was pretended, and the King was clear of all the great and odious Objections laid to his Charge, how came such an unnatural Rebellion to rage among us? Common Complaints, though justly founded, an unpopular or ungracious Behaviour, though somewhat disagreeable, do not usually

usually produce such strange Effects. I believe our History can furnish us with a clear Reply to this Question; and with submission to the *noble Historian* of those Times, it will, I think, appear that the *whole Series* of Events did not *entirely* arise *pro re nata*, but that there was both at Home and Abroad a concurrent Design to plunge us into a Civil War, and alter at least *some* Essentials both in *Church and State*. The King, in short, fell a Victim for the *Liberties of Europe* and the *Protestant Religion*. ABROAD, France was beginning to aim at *universal Monarchy*, but was disappointed by the vigorous Interposition of our excellent King, always true to the Interest of his *Country*: Nor could that Scheme *at all* succeed, till the *Usurper* of his Throne was content to sacrifice every Thing to his own Ambition. The *Pope* and the *House of Austria* were employed in rooting out the *Reformation in Germany*. 'Twas *Charles the First* that interested himself in the *Behalf* of the *Palatinate*; that assisted *Denmark*, and engaged the *victorious Swede* to protect the *Protestants* of the *Empire*. These were Faults never to be forgiven; and the Person who interrupted their Projects, was to be weaken'd at Home, that he might not give them trouble Abroad.

Abroad. The *Solemn League and Covenant* was contrived at *Paris**; and by Assistance from thence, Sedition was easily stirr'd up in the *North*; where some of the Nobility had disloyally robbed the King of the Possessions of the Crown, and *sacrilegiously* defrauded the *Church* of its Patrimony, of both which they dreaded the Resumption. The *People*, fond of nothing but *Calvinism*, and averse to every thing that was but CALLED *Po-pery*, were easily made subservient to the Politicks of their great Men, and willing to help their Brethren, the *Puritans* of this Nation; and they were as ready to receive their Assistance: For to all their other Errors they had added this *grievous Principle*, this unfociable Heresy, that where the supreme Power would not be *persuaded* to receive their *Discipline*, they might be *compell'd* by force to accept of it, or deposed in case of a Refusal. Hence in *Q. Elizabeth's* Time they not only threaten'd *her*, but sent REMONSTRANCES to the House of *Commons* (where they had *then* but small Interest) intimating their Destruction if they opposed *Christ's Kingdom*; but afterwards by the foreign Education of our Youth, and the

* Vide *Carte's History of the Life of James the first Duke of Ormond*, p. 89. Vol. I.

the remiss Discipline of the Government, they grew to such a Head, that being joined by some great and able Men, who secretly design'd a more Democratical Form of Government, they compleated the Destruction both of Church and State; which perhaps they never could have effected, had not the *Popish Rebellion* in *Ireland* supplied them with Pretences to raise Men and Money, and deprived the King of all Helps that might arrive from thence.

Thus we see what a formidable Union of wicked Interests there was combin'd against this unhappy Monarch: But then it shows his Cause to be as *glorious*, as it was *unfortunate*. On these Accounts, we may pronounce him a *righteous* Man; and believe his Hopes were *full of Immortality*, though he was punished in the Sight of Men. Which brings me to conclude with some practical Observations.

Thirdly, And, First, If those above-mention'd were the Causes that chiefly brought on our Ruin, as we have seen the Effects, and been acquainted with the Arts, let us be more cautious and guarded for the future against any Insinuations of the like kind.

Popery is still busy in making Converts to its Party *here*, and pushing its Interests in

other Countries, to the fatal Detriment and weakening of the Protestant Religion.

Puritanism is in several Respects much alter'd, but *in one* continues still the same: That it grows more importunate upon Concessions, and, like a *Dropſy*, requires more, the more is granted. But the worst is still behind.

The last Age, which was properly an Age of *Hypocrisy*, has produc'd (as one Extreme will produce another) this Age of *Infidelity*; than which nothing can be more fatal to human Society. *Enthusiasm*, when the Ferment is once over, may again settle into true Religion; but *Infidelity*, like a cold Poison, damps and chills every Thing around it. We have known Converts from most other Opinions, but a *sober, thinking Deist* seems to be so given over to his own *Conceit and Pride*, and so deserted by the *Grace of God*, that he is like the Grave, to which many go, but none, without a Miracle, ever return.

But it is the * Business of the *Civil Magistrate* to curb this increasing Sect; for
other-

* When I have in this Sermon declared so freely for *Toleration*, it may surprize some (who do not well consider the Difference) that in the same Discourse, I should so openly call in the Assistance of the *Civil Magistrate* to suppress *Infidelity* by his Power. But this seeming Inconsistency will
imme-

otherwise *Self-Murder* will daily grow more common, *unbounded Lust and Rapine* range thro'

immediately disappear, if they will but reflect, that I do not treat of *Deism* in this Place, as an *erroneous* Opinion; but as an Opinion *fundamentally destructive* of the Peace and Happiness of Human Society; which, it is the Business of the *Civil Magistrate* to preserve. I do not therefore here assert, that a *Deist* is to be *punish'd*, barely for *holding* his Opinions, but only when he is taken in Overt-acts of *propagating* Infidelity; which is as much, in a *moral Sense*, HIGH-TREASON AGAINST HUMAN SOCIETY, as any Attempt to dethrone a Prince can; in a *legal Sense*, he High-Treason against that Prince. This will be manifest to any one; that will but attend to this single Observation; viz. that the *present Infidels* do not intend, when they have extirpated *Christianity*, that any *other Revelation* should succeed in its room: For all their Arguments (such as they are) tend to show, that no *Revelation* is, or can be true. The Case was different, when any body was to be perverted to Paganism, or when Pagans were to be converted to Judaism, or Pagans or Jews to Christianity; or either of them to the Faith of *Mahomet*; for, even in the last, and first of these Instances, there were *some Principles* concerning *Providence* and a *future State*, on which the Foundations of Human Society might rest. But the *great Majority* of Mankind never did, nor will entertain any such Notions; but upon the Authority of *some Revelation*, either true or false. This is sufficiently evident from hence, that the far greater Part even of *Scholars*, who at present do embrace the Belief of a *Future State*, do in fact, admit it *only* upon the Testimony of the *Sacred Writings*. What then will become of the rest of Mankind, who have the same; if not greater Occasion for those Religious Ties and Obligations? *Tully* has long since told us, and (if he had been silent) Common Sense and Experience would have long since; to our Cost and Peril, taught us, that if we take away Religion, all the Bonds of Society will soon be dissolved. We cannot but with concern take notice, that in *Proportion* as Infidelity has been propagated, a general Dissoluteness of Manners, and the more frequent Commission of the most black and dreadful Crimes have presented themselves, not only to the View, but the Astonishment of all serious and sober Christians. Thus then I reason: If Religion be *absolutely necessary* for Human Society, and there can be no Religion long kept up among Men, but upon the Foot

A SERMON preached before

thro' all Orders of Men, the *Sacredness* of Oaths and Contracts be despised, and Government at last dissolved. But to go on ;

That some *Republican* Schemes have still their Existence, is plain from various and frequent Writings, which attack the *Monarchy* as freely as they do *Religion*, and seldom compliment *one*, but with an Intention to hurt the *other*. We have *already* tried all these several Schemes, *Religious* and *Civil*, and can find no Peace for our Souls in any of them. Let us not then be a *second* Time deceived by their false Pretences, but adhere firmly to the Constitution in Church and State, *viz.* to a *limited Monarchy* in the *Protestant* Succession, to a *real Establishment* of

of *some Revelation*, then an Attempt to remove *all Revelation* from among Men, is an Attempt to dissolve all Society ; which is the *greatest Civil Crime* that any Man can possibly be guilty of, and therefore calls aloud for the Vengeance and timely Interposition of the *Civil Magistrate*. This Argument will be found conclusive upon all (even the *largest*) Principles of *Civil Liberty*, that have ever been advanced by any reasonable Writer : Nor need our *Dissenters* be at all alarmed at any Consequences of this Doctrine, unless they maintain any Opinions injurious to the Government, or prejudicial to Human Society.

I at first compared the Case of *Infidels* to that of *Traytors* ; and, upon a Review of all that has been, or (as far as I conceive) can be offered in bar to what has been here laid down, no Objections or Inconveniences can be thought of in favour of the *former*, that will not equally (*i. e.* not at all) conclude in behalf of the *latter* : And if any Reader has a Mind to make the Experiment, I doubt not, but upon Trial, he will meet with the same Satisfaction.

of the Church of *England*, and to a † POWERLESS *Toleration of Dissenters*. Let us shew ourselves Dutiful and Obedient Subjects to his *Gracious Majesty*, nor weakly imagine this Nation can ever prosper under a profess'd *Republic* or a NOMINAL *Monarchy*. If we are happy enough to mark these Bounderies and Limits, then Confusion may not come upon us either from the Right Hand, or from the Left; but if Insatiation and Iniquity should prevail and get the upper Hand, yet,

Secondly, The Righteous may still have Respect unto the Recompence of the Reward, and pass even this Vale of Misery with some Comfort and even Chearfulness, when they reflect, that the Garden of Paradise lies at the End of it, where they shall be *in Peace*.

Lest this Doctrine should be thought impracticable, and too high for human Nature,
it

† That no Toleration should be granted, but what is POWERLESS, is a necessary Consequence of the former Article; for if it is proper there should be a *real Establishment* of the Church of *England*, it is proper that such Establishment should *continue* for the same Reason for which it was *at first made*: And, if it be proper it should *continue*, it is proper it should be *secured* and *guarded* against the Attempts of its *Enemies*, which it can never be, when *Power* is lodged in the Hands of *such Persons*, as are always determined by *Principles*, as well as *Inclination*, to *alter* the Establishment.

it pleases God, in his Providence, to permit outrageous and cruel Hands sometimes to insult the Greatest and the Best of Men, and at the same Time to assist the pious Sufferers with such an extraordinary Measure of Grace, as shall render their *Deaths* more serviceable to the Interests of Religion than their *Lives*. The King was divested of more than a Subject *can* lose, but no Subject could suffer with more Christian Courage than *He* did. But I need not proceed; His *Enemies* allow his *Martyrdom* all the Honours that his *Friends* could wish to adorn it with. Others have longer enjoyed Empire, no one ever left it so bravely. Justly therefore may this *Royal Martyr* be present to our Thoughts, when we bless God's holy Name, for all his Servants departed this Life in his Faith and Fear, beseeching him to give us Grace so to follow their good Examples, that with them we may be Partakers of his holy Kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.



SERMONS

ON

Different Subjects;

Never before Published.

SERMONS

ON

Different Subjects;

Never before Published.



SERMON I.

On CHRISTMAS-DAY.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulders, and his Name shall be call'd Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.



HE Proof of our most Holy Religion has for its Foundation these two grand Supports, namely, the Miracles wrought after our Lord's Incarnation, and the Prophecies concerning
B him,

SERM. I.

SERM. I. him, which were delivered by the Prophets that went before.

To speak accurately of this Matter, Prophecies do not differ from Miracles in kind, they being only a particular Species or Sort of Miracles; so that for any Man in grofs to assert that Prophecies are a better Proof of our Faith than Miracles, is to maintain that Miracles are a better Proof than Miracles; whereas all that can possibly in this Case be true, is, that some Miracles are more convincing than others.

The main Evidence that the Scripture Prophecies carry with them, arises chiefly from the multiplicity of the Predictions relating to our Saviour's Conception, Birth, Life, Actions, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; in all which Instances, not any thing foretold in the Old Testament, can be shewn to have failed, or have pass'd unfulfilled; and tho' some Passages must be allowed to have their Difficulties, yet many things are so plain, that *he that runs may at first sight read* their Completion.

This Superiority has our Holy Faith above other pretended Revelations, that the
Pre-

Predictions alledged to confirm *them*, are not only dark and ambiguous in their Meaning, and by consequence fairly applicable to other Things besides what they are design'd to serve; but also so few in Number, that the pretended Completion of them may be assign'd to Chance, or Human Policy, if there were no other Reasons to be produced against them: whereas our Prophecies either relate to Matters which nothing but Providence could be supposed to effect; or at least describe the Character, Condition and Circumstances of the Person foretold, so minutely, as must in some Instance or other necessarily baffle the Design of any one who shou'd falsely assume to himself that Character. So that tho' we should allow no one of the predicted Marks being found upon any Person would certify us that he was the *Messiah*, they being (most of them at least) fitter to point out who was *not* the *Christ*, than who *was*: Yet if we consider how highly improbable it is that so *many* Particulars shou'd be specified, and yet *all* concenter in the Person of *Jesus of Nazareth*; we must grant it to be a strong Argument to shew that he was the *Son of God*.

SERM. I.

Thus do we find the *Messiah* most particularly described throughout *the Law and the Prophets*, but no where so fully and exactly as in the Prophet *Ijaiah*, out of whose numberless Places to this purpose I have chosen this Text, in which the inspired Writer does not so much design to foretell any Facts, which by their Event wou'd prove the Truth of his Assertion; as to set forth the Dignity of the *Messiah's* Person, and declare to us the great End of his coming into the World. And here it may not be improper to observe by the Way, that Prophecy has other Ends in view besides foretelling of an Event that shall happen, or an eminent Person that shall arise hereafter.

In the beginning of this Chapter, the Prophet signifies the Place where the *Messiah* was to converse when he came among Men, and at the same time gives the reason of God's gracious Designation therein. *Nevertheless* (says he) *the Dimness shall not be such as was in her Vexation, when at the first he highly afflicted the Land of Zebulon, and the Land of Nepthali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the Sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the Nations, the People that walked in Dark-*
ness

ness have seen a great Light, they that dwell in the Land of the Shadow of Death, upon them hath the Light shined. v. 1, 2. SERM. I.

For the better understanding of these Words we may remember what the Scripture tells us of the early Affliction and Captivity of this People, even in the Days of *Pekah*, by *Tiglath-Pileser* King of *Assyria* (*2 Kings* xv. 29.) Now as it were in recompence of these early Sufferings, they are promised here by the Prophet a glorious Dignation from the Presence, Conversation, Preaching, and mighty Works of our Blessed Saviour. As the second Temple, which fell short of the first in the Glory of its Building, was to be more glorious than that in the Presence of the *Messiah*: so *Galilee*, tho' an obscure Country, and remote from *Jerusalem*, the principal City of the Nation, and a Country that had been early and very severely afflicted, shou'd yet be dignified with the Presence and Works of *Christ*. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulders; and his Name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father the Prince of Peace.*

SERM. I.

From these Words I shall endeavour briefly,

First, to shew the Dignity of the *Messiah's* Person.

Secondly, the great End of his Incarnation which we this Day joyfully celebrate. And then,

Thirdly, conclude with some Inferences from the whole.

And First, the *Messiah's* Dignity amply appears, in that he was to be the *Son given*, and because *the Government was to be upon his Shoulders*, and *he was to be call'd*, or to be acknowledged, *the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God*. Each of which Characters shall be explained in their Order.

We must, indeed, confess that the *Greek* Translation does not agree with our Text; but then as in general the *Hebrew* Copy is to be prefer'd; so more especially where it is to be presumed that the Interpreters, not being able to reconcile to themselves the literal Meaning, indulged themselves more easily in the liberty of a Paraphrase.

To which may be added, that neither do the *Greek* Interpreters agree among them-

themselves; some of the best Editions as SERM. I.
 well as some of the ancientest Fathers *
 confirming the present Text. I shall pro-
 ceed therefore to account for the several
 Characters of the *Messiah* therein men-
 tioned.

And first we are to consider in what
 Sense the *Messiah* is here call'd *a Son*, for
 that this Title is given here by way of Emi-
 nence appears plainly because 'tis placed ab-
 solutely, or by it self. Now there are se-
 veral eminent Senses in which the Word
Son is used in Scripture.

As First, upon account of the Holiness
 and Sanctity of the Person, and his Office.

Secondly, upon account of his Resurrec-
 tion is our Lord called *the Son of God*. For
Christ must therefore be acknowledged *the*
Son of God, because he is raised immediately
 by God out of the Earth unto Immortal
 Life, *as it is written in the second Psalm,*
Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten
thee. Acts. xiii. 33. The Grave is as the

* For the Reading of the Text are

Heb.

Alex. all but *Θεός*,

Ald.

Complut.

Ignat.

Irenæus.

Eusebius.

Theodor.

Vetus Missa.

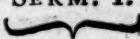
Womb

SERM. I.

Womb of the Earth: *Christ*, who is raised from thence, is as it were *begotten* to another Life, and God, who raised him, is his Father. So true it must needs be of him, which is spoken of others, who are *the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection. Luke xx. 36.*

A third Reason why our Saviour is called in Scripture *the Son of God*, is from his miraculous Conception by the Operation of the Holy Ghost, by which means God became as immediately the Father of *Christ*, as he was of *Adam*. *And the Angel answer'd and said unto Mary, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Luke ii. 35.* And our Saviour himself, in the 10th of St. *John*, says, that the Scripture would justify his being call'd *the Son of God, because he was sanctified, and sent into the World by the Father.*

This last Signification seems to be what *Isaiab* principally referred to in the Text, namely the Sonship arising from his miraculous Incarnation, as appears from the former Sentence, which seems to determine this latter, *unto us a Child is born.*
When

When therefore it is said here, or in the SERM. I. New Testament that *God has given or*  sent *his Son into the World*, we may among other Meanings understand this, that he has sent among us one whom he had first *sanctify'd*, i. e. set apart and prepared for this Purpose, and then miraculously begotten him on a Virgin by his own immediate Power and Operation.

It will not be here needful to enquire upon what higher Account he may be called the *Son of God*, because in this Place it evidently relates to his human Sonship; as may be farther evinced from its being the first Part of the Gradation, the lowest Part of the Character assign'd him in the Text.

The next is, that *the Government shall be upon his Shoulder*, i. e. that he shall be King of his Future Church. The *Government* being said to be upon his Shoulder, from the Scepter, the Ensign of Government, which was then usually carried upon the Shoulder.

And accordingly we find our *Messiah* acting like a King, and exercising his Government. For when he says *his Kingdom is not of this World*, *John xviii. 36.* he sufficiently owns he
has

SERM. I. has a Kingdom, *in* this World, tho' in the Nature of it, it be not *of* this World; tho' he disclaims such a Civil Dominion, as wou'd prejudice the Rights of *Cæsar*. However we find him prescribing Laws, exacting Obedience and Honour, promising Rewards, and denouncing Punishments.

And as all other Kings do not govern their Subjects separately and independently, but in a Body; so has *Christ* also formed his into a Society, in which they are to live together under his Government, with proper subordinate Officers to assist them, in doing and ordering all those things, which either the Nature of a Society does absolutely require, or they are sufficiently empower'd for, by the Original Charter of the Society they act in.

Nor does this Assertion tend to unking our Saviour, any more than other Kings cease to be such, when they govern by inferior Officers; since his also are restrain'd within the Limits of their Commission; and must give an Account for their Exercise of it, to our Great King and Master *Christ Jesus*. For the Scripture assures us, that tho' he ceases to govern us in Person, being ascended up into Heaven, where he sits enthron'd

thron'd on God's Right Hand, he yet will, SERM. I.
and *must* reign, till he has put all his Enemies under his Feet. 1 Cor. xv. 25.

Thus far the Prophet considers *Jefus* only as the *Messiah*; but this is the least Part of his Character, for he is also *the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God*. He is *the Wonderful Counsellor* as he is that Person, in conjunction with whom, God foreordain'd all Things before they were; by whose Wisdom *he laid the Foundations of the Earth, as the Heavens are the Work of his Hands*; who assisted at the Creation of all Things; and with whom, God is represented as advising, when he said, *Let us make Man in our Image*. Gen. i. 26. Now, tho' we often advise with our Equals; yet since the Name of *Counsellor* does sometimes carry with it the Notion of Inferiority; lest we shou'd here be guilty of a Mistake, the *Prophet* assures us, that this *Wonderful Counsellor*, is also *the Mighty God*, a Title as expressive as can well be imagined, to denote the real Divinity of our Blessed Saviour. *Mightiness* is in Scripture often applied to *Creatures*; and the Title of *Gods*, with some Note of Distinction, has been not uncommonly communicated to the Sons of *Men*:

But

SERM. I.

But none but the true *Jehovah*, has been any where dignified with this glorious Title of *the Mighty God*, absolutely and without any Limitation, as it appears in this Place.

Nor wou'd that God (it is to be presum'd) who always shews himself so jealous of his Honour, so unwilling to give his Glory to another, and who was so suspicious that the confusion of *Names*, wou'd introduce the confusion of *Notions*, that he forbad his own People to use the Word *Baal*. *Hof. ii. 16, 17.* This God, I say, it is to be presumed, wou'd not by his *Prophet* have laid this great Stumbling-block in our Way, which does so strongly induce us to think the *Wonderful Counsellor* his Equal.

Nor are we mistaken in our Exposition of the *Prophet*, if we may explain him by the beloved *Evangelist*, who was that among the *Apostles*, which *Isaiah* was among the *Prophets*, namely the loftiest and sublimest Writer about the Dignity and Divinity of his Master. He tells us that *the Word* (*i. e.* the highest Nature of the *Messiah*) *was God*. *John, i. 1.* and lest we shou'd have imagin'd him to have been graced with that Title from his Office; or the exercising any thing great or godlike over or amongst Men;

or

or even from his being instrumental in the Creation; St. *John* assures us that he *was God*, while he *was with God*, *i. e.* before he exerted himself among us; nay, even from the *Beginning*; which in the lowest Sense of the Phrase must be understood (as it is in the beginning of the Book of *Genesis*) to mean *before the Creation*: The *Word* therefore being *the Mighty God* that was *with God* before the Worlds, and there being nevertheless but one God (as we learn from other places of Scripture,) he must with the Father and the Holy Spirit, constitute or make *that one God* which the Christians worship.

That these Things are so, we must believe, because *God*, *who cannot lye*, has told us so; but *how* they can be so, we shall be able fully to explain, when Finite can comprehend Infinity. In the mean time, if we find ourselves startled with such Difficulties, we may take up the *Prophet's* Answer, when he was asked if *these dry Bones could live*, and say with all Submission and Adoration, *Lord, thou knowest! Ezek. xxxvii. 3.*

Hitherto have we discoursed of the Dignity of the *Messiah's* Person. We come now,

Secondly, to consider the Great End of his Incarnation, which we this Day joyfully cele-

SERM. I.

celebrate; and that is pointed out to us by the *Prophet* when he calls him the *everlasting Father*, and the *Prince of Peace*; by the former Expression shewing not only the Title to, but the Care and Tenderneſs with which he would manage the Affairs of his Church under the Gospel, called in the Old Testament *the Age to come*; and by the latter discovering to us what would be the blessed Effects of his Incarnation, namely, our being thro' him reconciled to God, on which account he is ſtiled the *Prince of Peace*. That Peace, which in the Angelick Hymn ſung upon the Birth of our Saviour, is called *Peace on Earth*, or God's *Good-will towards Men* Luke ii. 14. This was the Substance of the whole Chriſtian Faith, the Sum of that *Word which God ſent to the Children of Iſrael*, preaching Peace by Jeſus Chriſt. *Acts.* 10 36. *In whom it pleaſed God the Father, that all Fullneſs ſhou'd dwell, and having made Peace thro' the Blood of his Croſs, by him to reconcile all Things unto himſelf.* Col. i. 19, 20. That by Chriſt we might have acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father. *Eph.* ii. 18. Hence the Gospel is called *the Gospel of Peace*, and God ſo often in the New Testament *the God of Peace*,

Peace, tho' in the Old he is represented as *the God of Sabbath, or the Lord of Battle.* SERM. I.

This is that fundamental Truth, on which both the Old and New Testament keep their Eye constantly fixed, and to the Knowledge of which, all the Types, Ceremonies Prophecies, and Prefigurations were at last to lead us; namely the reconciliation of an offended God to lost Mankind.

Our Creator had declared to *Adam* the first of our Race, that he design'd him and us for Happiness, if Disobedience did not change his gracious Intentions. But *Adam* proved disobedient, and from thence he and his Posterity forfeited God's Favour. *By one Man Sin entered into the World* (as the Apostle tells us) *and Death by Sin; Rom. ii. 12.* which implies that Innocence wou'd have been attended with Immortality. We all then became Mortal, and found ourselves very prone to commit Sin.

This Consideration was extremely melancholy, since instead of hoping for Favour or Immortality, besides the wretched Condition of this Life, we had reason to fear God's calling us to Account for our Transgressions; for who cou'd tell whether the Lord wou'd forgive us upon our Repen-

SERM. I. Repentance, or be mov'd with our Humiliation? It being the Custom of human Governors to punish the Criminals, and vindicate the Honour of their Laws.

Here therefore Mankind were at a loss to conceive, how God cou'd discover the Riches of his Mercy by excusing us from Punishment, and at the same time not appear too tame and easy in passing over the Affronts we had offer'd to his Majesty. And here we must have stuck for ever, had not the Son of God graciously condescended to interpose between us and our Maker, to obtain his Pardon, that we might be saved; and yet to undergo so many Difficulties in the obtaining it, as might be consistent with God's Jealousy for his Honour; and at the same time effectually deter us from venturing again to offend our God, to whom we had before with so much Difficulty been reconciled.

In this Light we may easily perceive the great Wisdom of God, both in his Severity and in his Mercy. His hatred to Sin appears, first, in making all the Posterity of *Adam* forfeit their happy Condition, and become subject to the power of Death for his Disobedience. And secondly, in the
many

many difficult Steps that were required to be taken, before God wou'd be reconciled unto us. His Son must be our Sacrifice, and by his own Death redeem us from Death; God must be united to Man, that our High Priest might be worthy and powerful to save all. By the *Severity* of his Punishment our Maker shewed, that he would not *easily* forgive our Disobedience, and by the *kind* of it, most sensibly impressed upon our Memories what may serve as a sufficient Caution for the future, *viz.* how *near* we were to have suffered ourselves. But his Goodness is still eminent, in that he did *at all* admit us into Favour, in that he did accept of *any* Satisfaction; and his Love to Holiness is still more conspicuous, in that he chose the Sacrifice and Intercession of an *High Priest*, who was (as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* has it, vii. 26.) *holy, harmless, undefiled, without Sin*, and by consequence the fittest Person to have an Interest in Heaven, the fittest Person to be the Cause and *Author of Salvation to all that shall obey him.* Heb. v. 9.

For this End therefore, our Saviour became Incarnate, and led a mean and humble Life for our Instruction, and at last *was made Sin for us*, and submitted to a
C bitter

SERM. I. bitter Death upon the Cross, that by virtue of his Sufferings we might be even intitled to Eternal Life; and so thro' him become greater for our Ruin! 'Tis just therefore, *that in his Name Remission of Sins should be preached among the Nations*, and for this Reason is he justly called *the Prince of Peace*.

I come now, thirdly and lastly, to make some Inferences from the whole,

And first, let us with the Apostle St. Paul, the strong Obligation we lie under to practice our Duty with all Fear and Trembling, with all Diligence and Carefulness, considering the Greatness of our Salvation, the Dignity of our Deliverer, and the great Difficulties he underwent to accomplish our Deliverance. Surely we have the utmost reason to ask ourselves, *how we can think to escape if we neglect so great Salvation?* Abused Kindness will be turn'd into fiercer Hatred: How dreadful then will it be, to fall into the Hands of an enrag'd and incensed God, whose offers of Pardon we have rejected, and whose Mercies we have spurn'd at! No; let not this be our Case, but let us rather think.

Secondly, of returning him the Duty

ty that the most oblig'd Creature can pay to his greatest Benefactor. And that we may not mistake the Method, he himself has pointed it out to us, namely, that we honour him, and love one another; and doubtless we have reason to *honour the Son even as we honour the Father*, John v. 23. if we consider that we are more obliged to God for our Redemption than our Creation. As *God the Father* therefore, is more particularly our Lord as *Men*, so is *Christ* more especially so as *Christians*, tho' in both, the whole Trinity co-operate.

Let us never, therefore, be unmindful to ascribe all *Honour and Glory unto the Lamb that was slain*, and let us particularly practice and observe his *New Commandment*, i. e. that *as he loved us, so should we love one another*, John xiii. 34. — 13. and *greater Love than this can no Man have, that he lay down his Life for his Friends*.

This Precept as it is (at least in its full Latitude) peculiar to Christianity, so is it almost every where insisted upon by the sacred Writers, and pressed home earnestly upon us from the Example of our Saviour. Whenever, therefore, the publick Good, or the Necessities of our Brethren call

SERM. I.

for our Aid and Assistance, *let that Mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of God thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Man; and being form'd in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8. To whom be Glory, &c.*



SER.



SERMON II.

On WHIT-SUNDAY.

St. MARK iii. 28, 29, 30.

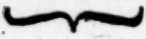
Verily I say unto you, all Sins shall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men; and the Blasphemies wherewith soever they shall Blaspheme:

But he that shall Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never Forgiveness, but is in danger of Eternal Damnation.

Because they said he hath an unclean Spirit.



THE last of these three Verses lets SERM. II.
us into the Reason, which induced
our Blessed Saviour to make the
Declaration contained in the two
former, and will be a proper Key to us for

SERM. II.  our better understanding what that Declaration means.

In the beginning of this Chapter, we see our Lord performing a miraculous Cure on *a Man who had a wither'd Hand*: But because this happen'd to be *on the Sabbath Day* (a Time which the *Pharisees*, thro' the Hardness of their Hearts, thought it was unlawful, even to do Good on) they were so far from being convinced that this mighty Work proceeded from the Finger of God, that they *went forth, and straitway took Counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. ver. 6.* and when upon his *withdrawing himself* from their Rage and Malice, *a great Multitude from Jerusalem, and all the adjacent Countries followed him, and he healed many, and unclean Spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. v. 8, 10, 11, 22.* yet notwithstanding all this, *the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem, said, he hath Beelzebub, and by the Prince of the Devils casteth he out Devils.*

Our Saviour then *call'd them unto him, v. 23.* and in two Parables most evidently confutes the unreasonable Insinuations, with which

which they had maliciously endeavoured to SERM. II.
asperse him, in order to evade the Force of
those Miracles, which they cou'd not deny
the Truth of; and then adds, *Verily I say*
unto you, all Sins shall be forgiven unto the
Sons of Men; and the Blasphemies wherewith
soever they shall Blaspheme: But he that shall
Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never
Forgiveness, but is in danger of Eternal
Damnation. Because they said, he hath an
unclean Spirit. i. e. Because they frustrated
his gracious Designs, and kind Intentions to
bring them over to the knowledge of the
Truth; and ascribed all those Powers, ma-
nifesting themselves in him, which were
as the Voice of God calling to them for At-
tention and Obedience, to the secret In-
fluence and Energy of the Devil; he takes
this Opportunity to forewarn them, that
the Spirit of God wou'd not always go on to
strive with rebellious and obstinate Men;
but that if they should still proceed to reject
the utmost and last means of their Convic-
tion, as they had hitherto opposed all those
which he had offer'd 'em; and refuse to
hearken to the *Holy Ghost*, more imme-
diately and eminently discovering himself,
[as upon this Day] and by the frequency and
number

SERM. II. number of his Miracles, above what any other Revelation, either real or pretended, ever boasted of, plainly convincing all who did not by the most wicked Obstinacy withstand so great Light and Evidence; He forewarns then, I say, that if they shou'd behave themselves in this manner, there wou'd then be no Method left to reclaim them, nor ought to be expected; but *a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.*

I shall not on this Occasion make any long *critical* Enquiries, whether by the *Holy Ghost*, must be understood a Person, or the Operations and Powers of that Person; or whether 'tis not as great a Crime to Blaspheme the Father and Son, as 'tis to Blaspheme the Holy Ghost; because I think 'tis very evident from the Text, as above paraphrased, that both must necessarily be comprehended.

For, as to the first, the Blaspheming the *Holy Ghost* being put in opposition to the Blaspheming *the Son of Man*: The former must as naturally denote a Person, as the latter is confess'd to do; tho' at the same time it must be own'd, that the Matter of that Crime,

Crime, by which they did offend the Holy SERM. II.
Spirit, consisted in despising his Operations.

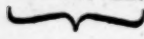
And as to the second Doubt, the Heinousness of this Crime does not arise from any supposed Superiority in either of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity ; but from the aggravating Circumstance of its being a Refusal of the last and fullest Evidence, which God thought fit to give Mankind.

Now whether this Blasphemy is only *unpardonable* in the lower Sense of the Word, as it signifies very difficult to be pardoned ; or whether in the strict and absolute Sense of the Word, *impossible* to be pardoned ; it being in either Acceptation sufficient to alarm us to use our utmost Caution that we keep ourselves at the greatest distance from this Sin, I shall go on to consider two Points, which will be of much greater Importance to us than these nice Enquiries ; more proper for the *present Occasion*, and which will be equally true, however the others are determined ; namely,

I. First, that 'tis a most inexcusable Crime to reject Divine Revelation, when God has afforded us *sufficient* Evidence of its Truth.

II.

On WHIT-SUNDAY.

SERM. II.

II. Secondly, that God has afforded us such Evidence with respect to the Christian Religion.

By a Divine Revelation, I mean the Will of God, about certain Points which we cou'd not (at least as well) discover by our ordinary Method of comparing our Ideas, and considering the nature of things; but what we may know from his own positive Determinations, notified to us by sufficient Messengers, or standing upon Record of undoubted Credit.

When we say, therefore, that God has made a Revelation of his Will to Mankind, we don't always mean, that he has actually enlightened their Understandings with the Perception of several new Truths; but that he has given any one, that will seriously and impartially attend to the Evidence, sufficient Reason to believe that the Proposal of such Doctrines and Commands, is the Proposal of his Will. That we are obliged thus seriously and impartially, to attend to a Divine Revelation, is no more than to say, we are oblig'd to attend to the Will of God.

To object to this, that a Revelation is not the Will of God to us, 'till it be known; and that, therefore, till then we are not obliged

obliged to attend to it, is the same Absurdity, SERM. II.
as to say, that because in human Govern-
ments, Subjects are not obliged by any E-
dicts before they can know them; that
therefore they are not obliged to enquire,
whether the Injunctions that come recom-
mended to them under that Character, are
really their Prince's Laws, or not; or that,
because such and such Actions don't become
our Duty from the Law of Nature, before
we are sensible that that Law enjoins them;
that therefore 'tis not our Duty to examine,
whether the necessity of performing them
does arise from that Law, or not.

One of the first Reflections a Man that
is endeavouring to know himself can make,
is, that he stands in the relation of a Sub-
ject to that Sovereign Lord and Master, who
sent him into the World to act that Part
which he shall order him; and the Conse-
quence of this will be, that 'tis his constant
Duty, to inform himself by all reasonable
Methods what those Orders are.

For which Reason he will make the best
use of the Helps God has at present afford-
ed him, by consulting his own Reason, and
taking in the Assistance of other People, and
by being ready to receive what new Instruc-
tions

SERM. II. tions God Almighty shall farther send him ;
 for all these are reasonable Methods of Information.

That the two former are so must be allowed ; nor can the latter, *viz.* That God can reveal himself to Mankind, be denied ; for there is no Absurdity in the Supposition ; and to confine the Power and Wisdom of God where Contradictions don't limit them, is as contrary to Reason as 'tis to Religion : But in the contrary Supposition, there is a very great Absurdity ; because it implies, that God is not able so far to suppress the Designs and Attempts of all other Beings, which are his Creatures, as to distinguish *his* Revelations from *theirs*.

But what then ? Are we obliged to attend to every one that pretends to come commissioned from God Almighty, and assures us that he can inform us what is his Will ? At this rate Men might spend their Lives in seeking after new Religions, and pass their Days in following whither-soever the warmth of their Neighbour's Imagination would lead them.

To this I Answer :

First, That in the Case of the Christian Religion, all this dreaded Consequence can
 never

never take place, because the moment we ^{SERM. II.} are satisfied *that* is true, we are also satisfied that all other Religions, which either are or shall be offered to us, must necessarily be false.

Secondly, That even before we are supposed to embrace the Belief of any Revelation, the Consequence won't be so fearful as is imagin'd; for as when 'tis said, that we ought to be ready to take the Advice of other People, it is not meant that we ought to listen to every officious Person, that wou'd obtrude his Counsel upon us, and from whom we cou'd not reasonably expect any Information: so neither are we obliged, thoroughly to enter into the Examination of every Pretender to Revelation, when the System of his Doctrine does not appear worthy of a Divine Original; or the Proofs of it are so superficial, slight and transient, as not to afford a Man all reasonable and convenient Time, to consider over and over again the Justness of the Pretensions.

In all these Matters, that relate to moral Prudence, there is a Latitude to be allow'd, which 'tis very difficult to state in Theory, but not so hard to put in Practice when occasion offers.

Thus

SERM. II.

Thus for Instance, tho' counterfeit Revelations may sometimes offer themselves to us with such a solemn Appearance, as may very much raise our Expectations, and we can't so exactly define what deserves our Attention, and what not: yet when God proposes any thing to us, we need not doubt but that it will come recommended with such powerful and alarming Circumstances, as will challenge our Regard and most serious Consideration.

But tho' we should be obliged to attend to any Revelation, which we may easily and obviously discover the Truth of; yet some will pretend, that it can never be our Duty, to believe a Religion which requires any measure of Thought and Application for us to be convinced of. Nothing is necessary, say they, but what is clear and very easy to be apprehended; and if therefore we believe no Doctrine in Scripture necessary, but what may without any Difficulty be apprehended; much less should we believe the Scriptures themselves as necessary to be received by Mankind, if the Proofs of their Truth are not very plain and obvious.

To which I answer, that as we ought not to reject a Doctrine, as requiring too much

much Pains to understand it, which does ^{SERM. II.}
not require more than the Foundation on
which it stands: so neither can we justly re-
ject that Foundation, or disbelieve Christiani-
ty, as not obvious to our Apprehensions,
when the Proofs of it are as clear, as the
Proofs of several of the Parts of Natural Re-
ligion; or whatever else Men will own for
the Rule of their Conduct and Proceeding,
whether it be their Principles of Honour,
or what they call the present Interest of So-
ciety; for that Argument which bears hard
upon all Schemes in general, one of which
must still be accepted, can conclude against
none in particular.

'Tis our Duty to inform ourselves in
what Cases 'tis lawful to take away a Man's
Life, and in what not, and so throughout
the several Laws of Nature. 'Tis our Duty
to consider what is the Interest of ourselves,
our Families, and the Societies, in which
we live; and he that will own all this to be
our Duty, notwithstanding its Difficulty,
can bring no Objection against any Religion
that we wou'd desire to defend.

Nothing, certainly, can be necessary,
which 'tis not possible for us, even with a
reasonable measure of Application to attain
to,

SERM. II.

to ; but to say that nothing is necessary but what is obvious and easy, is directly contrary to the very Design for which God sent us into this World ; which was to use Application and Industry, and to employ all our Faculties in finding out and doing his Will.

As to Idiots and Men of a Rank not much superior to them, the same may be said for their not understanding the Truth of a Revelation, as for their Ignorance in natural Duties ; and doubtless to whom God has given little, of them he will require little ; but Men of Common Sense may as well apprehend *that* as *these*.

I don't say they may as easily answer all the Objections, or so immediately see thro' all the Difficulties, with which ingenious Men may endeavour to perplex them, either in this or in any other Case. All that I contend for is, that the Generality of Mankind, wou'd they use such an Attention and Application here, as they are seen to employ in some other Affairs, wou'd so far apprehend the Reasonableness of what is offered in Defence of Christianity, as to acquiesce in the Belief of it with such a Satisfaction, as they are wont to receive in other Matters.

To

To reject then a Divine Revelation when SERM. II.
 God has given us sufficient Evidence of its Truth; must be an inexcusable Crime, as 'tis lopping off a large Branch of our Lord's Prerogative, and confining his Government to our own narrow Schemes, and depriving him (as far as Men can) of an Opportunity of shewing forth his Wisdom, Power and Glory, in a most particular and conspicuous Manner.

As this Crime is so great, so no Care can be too great that will tend to preserve us from being guilty of it. Let us therefore,

Secondly, Consider whether God has afforded us sufficient Evidence with respect to the Christian Religion.

And such Evidence 'tis plain there is, if the System of Doctrine proposed by *Jesus Christ* be worthy of the Son of God, and the Miracles, which fix and certify its Original of such a Nature, that Men might easily know the Reality of 'em; for this, when known, would as easily evince them to be done by a Being, who either mediately or immediately had the Command of Nature in his Power, which either must be God himself, or some Being acting in his Government by his immediate and direct Permission;

SERM. II.

tion ; but God cannot permit any delusive Being so exactly to imitate him as that there should be no perceivable Difference ; for that would be, to render it impossible for him to make a Revelation of himself, which implies the Absurdity abovemention'd. And therefore,

2dly also, such a Doctrine and such Miracles must be a sufficient Proof of any Religion, because 'tis all the Proof that the Nature of the Thing will admit of, which to suppose not sufficient, is to run again into the same Absurdity.

That the System of Doctrines proposed by *Jesus Christ*, is the most compleat and finish'd Scheme of Morality in the World, is acknowledged by his very Enemies. This Concession is enough for our present Purpose. Tho' I can't but by the bye observe, that to believe this admirable and faultless System was contrived by a mere Man of a low Employment and mean Education who died at the Age of thirty-four, is to swallow what is more difficult to be digested than all the Miracles in the Old and New Testament.

That the Miracles which proved the Christian Religion, were of such a Nature as that 'twas impossible for those that saw

'em

em to be deceiv'd in, will appear to any one that considers only those of them which our Church has set apart this Day to commemorate. Namely, the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles enabling them to speak with all Languages, work all Miracles, and invest Numbers, great Numbers with the same Powers.

I own Mankind is too credulous, and therefore had not the Christian Religion better Proofs than any other, we might be excused for rejecting it. 'Tis possible indeed, that one or two Persons might privately have learn'd some Languages, with which they might afterwards surprize the World; but to imagine that Numbers shou'd of a sudden discover an Ability of Speaking all sorts of Tongues, and even of conferring that Gift on others, and continue their working Miracles indisputably for above two Centuries, when during this Time the whole World was alarm'd, and had sufficient Opportunity seriously and strictly to examine into the Merits of the Cause, and yet cou'd find nothing of moment to object, but at last, gradually and fairly submitted themselves to its mighty Force and Energy; to imagine all this, I say, to be a Contrivance by which

SERM. II.

so many of the Apostles themselves were imposed on, must proceed from a Mind so prejudiced as deserves a Name I can better think of, than speak.

As they therefore themselves had at that Time sufficient Reason to embrace Christianity: So the Consideration that 'twas impossible that they shou'd endeavour to deceive others, ought to rivet us in the same Faith. I come now,

Thirdly, To make some general Observations on this Text. Which it very much concerns us to entertain right and due Apprehensions of.

For tho' our Blessed Saviour applies himself in this Discourse only to Persons who were not Christians, nay, who even shou'd refuse to be Christians, after they had seen the numberless Miracles of the Holy Spirit, and had the last and strongest Means of Conviction offer'd to them: Yet many well-meaning Christians, either thro' an unhappy Disposition of Body, or a melancholick Temper of Mind, work'd upon by the sly Insinuations and cunning Craft of the Tempter, who is always lying in wait to deceive us, and ready to make his best Advantages of our Weakness, have imagin'd themselves actually

ally to have committed a Sin, which they never could be guilty of, and so fallen into Despair and Despondency, and really offended God one way, out of a groundless Fear, that they have offended him another. Thus powerful and great is the Cunning and Malice of our bitter Enemy, who can sometimes persuade us we are in the utmost Security, while we are in the most imminent Danger; and at other times make us suspect we are in the greatest Danger, when there is none but what arises from our own Fears!

Was not this *Prince of the Air* sometimes permitted to exercise his Arts upon us, it could not be well accounted for, how so many Men, even while they are doubtful what their imaginary Sin is, or whether they have sinn'd or no, should think they were guilty of the greatest Affront they could offer Heaven.

As difficult is it to apprehend how, when they are so overcome with Melancholy, they should misapply this Place so much to their Disadvantage, which 'tis most evident only relates to the Obstinacy and harden'd Hearts of those who would not be wrought upon to acknowledge *Jesus Christ* to be the *Messiah*,

SERM. II. *fiab*, by the most powerful Convictions that it was possible to offer to 'em.

The Consideration of the Context makes this so very plain, that it will be well worth my while to set the whole before you in the Words of a learned Commentator, who paraphrases our Lord's Words in this Manner.

“ You have represented me as a Wine-bib-
 “ ber, a Friend of Publicans and of Sin-
 “ ners, and as one who casts out Devils by
 “ *Beelzebub* ; and you will still go on after
 “ all the Miracles I have done among you
 “ to represent me as a false Prophet, and a
 “ Deceiver of the People ; but notwith-
 “ standing, all these grievous Sins shall be
 “ forgiven you, if that last Dispensation of
 “ the Holy Ghost, which I shall after my
 “ Ascension send among you, shall prevail
 “ with you to believe in me. But if when
 “ I have sent the Holy Ghost to testify the
 “ Truth of my Mission and Resurrection,
 “ you shall continue in your Unbelief, and
 “ shall blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and re-
 “ present him also as an evil Spirit, there is
 “ no Hopes then for Pardon, because there
 “ can be no farther Methods used to bring
 “ you to Repentance.”

How

How easy is it, from the Text thus explained, for any one to satisfy himself that he has not been guilty of this unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost? For may not he ask himself this plain Question. Have I rejected the Christian Religion? Do I believe *Jesus Christ* to be an Impostor, and his Revelation all a Cheat? and do I do this too, after I have enjoyed the blessed Opportunity of hearing his Divine Mission fully proved, and sufficiently made out? Whoever puts this Question to himself, and can answer that he does believe the Truth of Christianity can never be guilty of this Sin.

In short, no Christian, while he remains a Christian, can be guilty of this Sin; because the very Sin consists in refusing to be a Christian, or rejecting the Belief of it after we have embraced it, and even heard substantial Arguments for it.

After this Manner also are those Texts in the *Hebrews* and St. *John's Epistle* to be interpreted which speak of a *Sin unto Death*, *Heb. x. 26.* of a *Sin for which there is no Sacrifice*, 1 *John v. 16.* and for which we are forbid to pray. That is, they all relate to the apostatizing from Christianity, after they had felt and tasted of the Evidence of the

SERM. II. Spirit, and the Powers of another World, and had consequently had all the Means of Salvation that could work upon reasonable Creatures.

Now if this be so, how injuriously both to themselves, and the Honour and Glory of God, do some People imagine they have been guilty of this Crime, only because the Devil has suggested to their Minds some wicked Thoughts, or made them think of some blasphemous Expressions, which they are so far from approving and uttering to the Dishonour of their Saviour, that 'tis the greatest Pain and Anxiety to them that they have the Misfortune to be troubled with such Insinuations of the Tempter.

But let 'em not be discouraged. 'Tis no Sin to be tempted, so long as we don't comply with the Temptation, 'tis only our consenting to it, that can make it criminal, for we never offend God by what we *can't* help, but by what we *can*.

Secondly, Those Persons too, must be much mistaken, who imagine they have been guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, because they don't receive all that Comfort from righteous Actions, which they fancy they shou'd. Hence they guess, that they

they are left of God, forsaken by the Holy Spirit, and that his Grace and Influence is withdrawn from 'em. SERM. II.

But this can never be the Sin against the Holy Ghost for the Reason abovemention'd; namely, because 'tis not a rejecting Christianity. Nay, so far is it from being that great and grievous Sin, that 'tis generally speaking, no Sin at all. That Despondency and want of Comfort which they complain of, arises generally speaking, from some ill Habitude of Body, or want of Health. But that ought to afflict no good Christian, since the Enjoyment of that inward Satisfaction is at best, but the Reward of our Duty, but no part of the Duty itself.

Such Joy sometimes arises from the natural Cheerfulness of our Temper, sometimes from a false Confidence in ourselves, and the Delusions of *Satan*, and sometimes indeed 'tis the Gift of God; but even then 'tis not a Virtue, but only our good Fortune; which we enjoy like the other Gifts of Providence, and for the Possession of which we are the happier, but not the better Men.

Religion consists in believing those Points God has proposed to our Understanding,
and

SERM. II.

and performing those Actions God has commanded us to perform ; but whether such a Conduct shall bring us Joy in this World or the next, is what we ought to leave to God's Wisdom.

The last Observation I wou'd make is, how diligent we ought to be in rooting all Prejudices out of our Minds, that we may freely and impartially study the Word of God, and know his Will.

For to an inveterate Obstinacy and Prejudice was it owing, that so many of the *Jewish* Nation could resist such plain and full Evidence as the *Messiah* brought with him to prove his Divine Commission ; and that such their withstanding the Truth ought to be ascribed to obstinate Prejudices, and not their own Incapacity, or the Obscurity of the Proof, is from hence manifest, that the Arguments our Saviour alledged in his Behalf, were of the same Nature with those on which the whole *Jewish* Religion rested, only attended with every additional Circumstance that could encrease their Credit, or heighten their Authority. So that every time they denied the Divinity of *our* Faith, they at the same Time destroyed the Credibility of *their own*. Nor could they be justified in
not

not receiving our Lord's Kingdom as ^{SERM. II.} something new or surprising, for 'twas the constant Expectation, even at that very Time, of the whole *Jewish* Nation.

It remains therefore, that nothing but their wicked and obstinate Prejudices were the Cause of their Infidelity, and agreeable to this Observation we find from History, that the *Jews* at that Time were remarkably Wicked, Proud, and Obstinate.

Since then, nothing can be so plain to be understood, or so easy to be practised, but that our Prejudices (when indulged) can get the better either of our Understanding or our Will; how careful shou'd we be to root out those Vices which are the Foundation of such pernicious Prejudices! to lead an holy and pious Life! to cloath ourselves with Humility and Meekness, that we may readily come into those Doctrines which our Saviour has recommended to our Belief, tho' they may be far above the Comprehensions of our frail Understanding; and chearfully submit to the Practice even of those Virtues which are most contrary to Flesh and Blood.

Above all Things let us constantly apply ourselves to the *Author and Giver of all good Gifts,*

SERM. II. *Gifts, that he would help our Infirmities by his Holy Spirit, that by his Direction we may so read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Holy Scriptures, that by Patience and Comfort of his Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*





SERMON III.

The ETERNITY *of* HELL
TORMENTS *Asserted.*

MATTH. XXV. 46.

*And these shall go away into Everlasting
Punishment.*

AS the System of Doctrine which SERM. III.
our Blessed Saviour delivered to
his Disciples, cleared from the
false Glosses of the *Jewish* Doc-
tors, free from the Defects and Errors inci-
dent to all other Moralists that ever wrote,
and so admirably suited to the Perfection
E and

SFRM. III. and Dignity of human Nature, made even his Enemies confess that *He spake as never Man spake**: So if we consider how well his Laws are guarded, what endless Glories on one Hand annex'd to the Observance; and on the other, what everlasting Torments are threaten'd for the Violation of them; and on how sure a Foundation both these Motives rest; we shall have reason to acknowledge with the *Evangelist*, that *He taught, as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes*†, not as the Founders or Directors of any other Civil or Ecclesiastical Society.

And reasonable indeed it was, that when *Christ* required a stricter Obedience from his Followers, that the Motives to our Duty should rise in Proportion to our Obligations; and that when we were commanded even to part with, *our offending right Hand or right Eye*, we should be forc'd to the unwilling Compliance, by knowing, that otherwise we should be *cast into Hell-fire, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*‡. When therefore in the Middle of the Chapter, our Lord had press'd his Disciples to

diligen

* John vii. 46. † Matth. vii. 29. ‡ Ibid. v. 29, 30

diligent Improvement of their *Talents* by SERM. III.
owning himself an *hard Master*, who *expected to receive his own with Usury*, he most properly concludes it, by assuring them, that *the Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

I'm sensible with what Disadvantage we plead our Cause against the Adversaries of this Doctrine, who upbraid us that our Sentiments proceed from our ill-nature, and that we declare against *God's* shewing Mercy, because we have no Disposition for it *ourselves*. A Character bad enough for any body to deserve, but most unbecoming a Minister of the Gospel of Peace and Mercy, most unworthy of *Priests*, who like their *High Priest*, ought to be *touch'd* with human *Infirmities*, since like him they have been *tempted*, but unlike him, not *without Sin*. But are we *therefore* become your *Enemies*, because we tell you the Truth? Whether it be *Good*, or whether it be *Evil*, that we *prophecy*, like *Micajah*, we must *speak* nothing, but *what the Lord hath commanded* *. Were this dreadful Hereafter, a Scene of our own Invention, justly should we lie

E 2

under

* 1 Kings xxii.

SERM. III. under the Imputation: But if God hath said it, if Truth itself hath assured us of it, the utmost Charity, and the greatest good Nature we are capable of shewing, is not to cry *Peace where there is no Peace* *, and *sow Pillows to all Armholes* †; but to lift up our Voice like a Trumpet, and shew the People, not only of *their Transgressions* ‡, but also of the terrible Consequences that will most assuredly attend them; i. e. that *the Wicked shall go into everlasting Punishment*.

In the farther Prosecution of this Subject I will endeavour,

First, To prove, and

Secondly, To justify the Eternity of Hell Torments.

Thirdly, To answer some Objections, and

Fourthly, To shew what Influence this Doctrine ought to have on our Lives and Conversations. And

I. First, I will endeavour to prove the Eternity of Hell Torments.

However clearly we may demonstrate a future State from the mere Light of Nature, the Eternity of that State must, if any

* Jer. vi. 14. † Ez. xiii. 18. ‡ Is. lviii. 1.

where,

where, be found in the reveal'd Will of SERM. III.
God. For tho' 'tis very plain, that he who
sent us into the World for this very Reason,
that we might as his Subjects observe the
Rules of his Government, will not fail to
vindicate his injured Honour and Authority,
when we fail to observe those Rules; yet,
after what Manner he will express his Re-
sentments, or what Degree of Punishments
we shall suffer for our Offences, he only
can, in this Case, be the proper Judge, who is
also the Party offended.

No Torments can be greater than we de-
serve, none therefore can be so great, as that
it would be unjust in God to inflict 'em; but
the Proportion of Punishments arising not
only from the Demerit of the Criminal,
but also from the Wisdom of our Gover-
nor, since it would be impossible for us to
form an adequate Idea of his Wisdom, it
must be equally impossible for us to form
a true Notion of what is the Result of his
Wisdom.

But *Jesus Christ, who hath brought Life
and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*, hath
in the same Gospel acquainted us what
*Wrath is treasur'd up against the Day of
Wrath* for Impenitents and Unbelievers.

SERM. III. He, who hath told us what inconceivable Pleasures are laid up in Heaven for *those that love God*, hath also by his Spirit foretold us what amazing Tortures wait for wicked Men in that Mansion *prepared for the Devil and his Angels, whence the Smoke of their Torments shall ascend for ever and ever, and they shall have no Rest Day nor Night**.

I need quote no other Passages of Scripture, that of my Text is sufficient, where the same Word in the Original is used to express both the *everlasting* Joys of Heaven, and the *everlasting* Pains of Hell; and therefore must in both Places be taken in the same unlimited and unrestrain'd Sense.

That the Word *αἰώνιος*, when applied to Life, is to be understood absolutely, few or none are willing to deny; and were they disposed to undertake so hardy an Attempt, it would be easy to prove our Assertion from parallel Places, where the same Subject is treated of in Words that manifestly admit of no Limitation. For Instance, to the Pious, there is not only promised an Eternity of Happiness, but Immortality; and as the proper Ground of its Incorruptibility is set forth as belonging to them, 1 Cor. xv.

53.

* Rev. xiv. 2.

53. And tho' there may be sometimes a pri- SERM. III.
mary and secondary Sense of the Word *ἀθανασία*, as imparting either a derived
or an underived Immortality; yet it al-
ways equally imports an unlimited Ex-
tent of Duration. Besides, 'tis declared of
the same Persons, that they are to *die no*
more; and *Sempeternity* is expressly opposed
to *Diuturnity*, without respect to their Con-
dition. Tho' therefore we grant the Word
αἰώνιος often carries with it a *limited*
Sense, yet it must be also owned that it often
is used in an *unlimited* one. That it is so
here, we prove from other parallel Places,
when applied to Life; and that it must be
construed in the same Manner, when joined
to *κόλασιν*, is evident from the *Antithesis*
in the Text. This therefore I may take for
granted, that the Scripture *threatens* the
Impenitent with eternal Torments; the
only Question will be, whether God is
obliged to *execute* what he has denounc'd:
That he is oblig'd, I believe the following
Considerations will evince.

First, then, God having threaten'd eter-
nal Punishments, tho' it might not be thence
necessary that God *should* inflict them, 'tis
at least necessary that Men should believe he

SERM. III. *would*, in order to the very End for which they were threaten'd, *i. e.* to deter Men from entering into vicious Courses; for
 “ the Belief of the Threatnings of God,
 “ in their utmost Extent, is of so great
 “ Moment to a good Life, and so great a
 “ Discouragement to Sin,” (says our great *British* Preacher, whose Testimony in this Point is of considerable Weight) “ that if
 “ Men were once set free from the Fear and
 “ Belief of this, the most powerful Re-
 “ straint from Sin would be taken away* ;”
 and consequently, give me Leave to add, God’s whole Design, in the Promulgation of these Penalties, become entirely of no Effect.

Now if there can be any Reason assign’d to shew, that ’tis *not* necessary that God *should* exact these Penalties, from thence it will follow, that I shall not be perswaded that he *will* exact them; for I cannot be perswaded that God will do a Thing, which, as far as I know, he will not do.

It will be to small Purpose here to reply, that we do not know but God *may* keep his Word, unless we are absolutely sure that he certainly *will* do it. For, who would leave the

* *Tillotson*, Fol. Vol. I. p. 410.

the Enjoyment of certain Pleasure for uncertain Pain? Or, who would not conclude that Mercy *certainly will* interpose, where we know, consistently with God's other Attributes, it *certainly may*. SERM. III.

Hence either the End, for which God annex'd his dreadful Sanctions to his Laws, is entirely frustrated, and become of no Use; or we must be heartily *persuaded*, that God is obliged to insist upon those Sanctions, whether he be or not. But then,

Secondly, Can the great Designs of infinite Wisdom thus miscarry? Shall Omniscience contrive a Scheme, and the superior Wit of foolish Man disappoint him? No, surely; for *deep are his Counsels, and his Ways past finding out* *. The Almighty wills that we should think of him as one that will be *justified in his Sayings, and clear when he is judged* †. It is therefore inconsistent with his Wisdom to imagine, he has left us any Reason whereby we might discover that *he has said, and will not do it, that he has sworn, and will not perform it* ‡.

From hence it follows, that for the very same Reason for which he threatned, God must have given us Cause to believe his
Threat-

* Rom. xi. 33. † Psal. li. 4. ‡ Numb. xxiii 19.

SERM. III. Threatnings. Either therefore what he denounces is true, or he obliges us to believe a Lie, *i. e.* he obliges us to think we see Reason to believe (for no one can believe without what appears to him a Reason for his Faith) what in Reality there is no manner of Reason to believe.

So whichsoever Way we turn ourselves, in hopes of an Evasion, from these two Considerations it is manifest, first, that to suppose God may threaten, and yet not execute, either imputes to him on one hand an human Weakness and defeated Counsels, or on the other hand stains and dishonours the Success of them with shameful Sophistry and Delusion.

And from hence too it is evident, that all Reasonings tending to shew there is no Necessity that God should execute his Threats, must of course be all necessarily inconclusive, because they are all necessarily destructive of that very End for which God did first publish them, *i. e.* that they should be believ'd, in order to influence our Behaviour.

Thirdly, Either God could not *threaten* eternal Torments, or he is oblig'd to *execute* them; for the threatening them supposes at least that he may consistently, with all his
Attri-

Attributes, put his Threatnings in Execution : SERM. III.

If with *all* his Attributes, then with his infinite *Goodness*. But the Nature of infinite Goodness is such, that it will not *suffer* him to inflict even the *least* Evil on his poor Creatures, more than what his Justice, Wisdom and Honour absolutely demand. Now by his Threatning, it appears that his infinite Goodness *can suffer* him to inflict eternal Torments : Therefore they are such as his Justice, Wisdom and Honour absolutely demand.

This Argument, founded on the fix'd and certain Attributes of God himself, seems capable of no Evasion ; which we may the sooner judge of, because it lies within a narrow Compass. God's Goodness to us will not permit him to exercise the least Severity, that 'tis but even possible, for him to avoid. And his Truth and Justice to himself will not permit him by *threatning*, to pretend or feign himself able to exercise a Severity, which he knows, consistently with his Goodness, he is not able to exercise.

Fourthly, The Scripture, which contains these Threats of the Lord, declares also, *that he cannot go back from what is spoken**, but that

* Ezra xxiv. 14.

SERM. III. *that he must be found true, tho' every Man be a Liar* *. It ascribes *Veracity* to him in as absolute a Manner as it does *Justice* or *Goodness*; and God might as well, upon any Considerations, cease to be *wise*, as he can cease to be *true*. It never defines a Lie from the Inconveniences or Disadvantages which may attend it, but only from its Opposition to strict Truth. No *Lie*, says St. *John*, is of the Truth, 1 John ii. 21. *Wherefore putting away Lying* (says St. *Paul*) *let every Man speak Truth with his Neighbour, for we are Members one of another*, Ephes. iv. 25. As we may surely trust in the *Hope of eternal Life*, because God, that cannot lie, hath promised it from the Beginning, with the Apostle, *Titus* i. 2. So the same Author informs us, in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, that God hath sworn that they who do always err in their Hearts, shall not enter into his Rest, Heb. iii. 10, 11. And that both his Word and his Oath are two immutable Things, in which 'tis impossible for him to lie, Heb. vi. 18.

However apt this Reasoning may be to convince, yet perhaps it may scarce satisfy, while we think it denies God Almighty a
Power

* Rom. iii. 4.

Power which is allow'd Mankind. Hence SERM. III.
Governments may annex what Penalties they
please to the Breach of their Laws, and yet
not take hold of the Forfeiture ; but God
alone can threaten, and not pardon.

To this it may be replied,

First, That Men here on Earth are in a probationary State, both with respect to God and their Governors, who therefore, if it seem fitting to them, may remit either all, or as much of the Punishment as is convenient. But the Impenitent in a future State are in an absolute Condition ; they are not to be put under any new Trials, but to account now for their Behaviour in former ones.

Secondly, Human Governments have, by God's Appointment, no Honour nor Majesty to vindicate, any farther than it is conducive to the Good of the People that it should be vindicated, from which it had its first Original, and by which 'tis still to be limited and regulated.

Now the short Foresight of human Governors, not reaching to the Variety of Circumstances that may afterwards possibly intervene, very often find it as *convenient* to remit their Punishments, as it was at first
proper

SERM. III. *proper* to denounce them. But with the Almighty 'tis quite otherwise, for 'tis most certainly true, that we were made for him, and not he for us, whatever becomes of the Dispute, whether Kings were made for the People, or the People for Kings. And then no new Circumstances can arise to him, but what were foreseen by him, not only when he spake, but even before the Foundation of the World.

I shall now endeavour,

II. Secondly, to justify this severe Sentence, tho' it might be sufficient for us to know that God is without knowing the Reason *why* he is oblig'd to punish the Impenitent with eternal Torments. For *our Thoughts are no more like his Thoughts, than our Ways are like his Ways* *. O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! for who hath known the Mind of the Lord? or who hath been his Counsellor †? For us therefore to say, the Lord has no Reason for his Proceedings, because we don't comprehend his Reason, is as much as to say, our Wisdom is adequate to his Wisdom. But yet his

* If. lv. 8.

† Rom. xl. 33, 34.

his Knowledge is not greater than his Con- SERM. III.
descension ; he permits, nay, invites us to
reason with him, so it be with *Modesty*, and
to *consider* of his Doings, so it be but with
Submission.

Now the Necessity of God's calling the Wicked to account in a future State, will appear not at all wonderful to us, if we consider either the Nature of *God*, or the Nature of *Punishment*.

'Tis a very false *Maxim* they support themselves with, who assert that all Punishment is corrective, and not vindictive ; for tho' it must be allow'd to be true in relation to human Governors, I hope I have above prov'd, that it is quite otherwise with respect to our heavenly one ; yet, for want of this Distinction has, I believe, arisen all the false Reasoning about this Matter.

We may still grant that all Punishments are in their Nature preventive, tho' not only so. For to that End does God inflict everlasting Torments ; namely, to prevent Men from sinning, for he could not prevent Mankind from Vice, any otherwise than by threatening such Tortures, nor could he threaten 'em, unless he executes them.

To

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To prescribe Laws without adding a sufficient Sanction to engage a reasonable Being, (whose only Motive to Action must be his own Happiness) to observe 'em, would be a Weakness incompatible to an allwise Being. But what sufficient Motive have I to resign any Pleasures of this Life, and plunge myself into Difficulties and Misfortunes in Pursuance of the severe Rules of Virtue, if I was to have no Compensation *hereafter*, for what I'm ready to forego *here*? Or on the other hand, what sufficient Restraint have I to preserve me from complying with any seasonable Villany, that either the Law does not reach, or the Multitude of Offenders makes reputable, and by which I may secure to myself easy Circumstances, and avoid great Inconveniencies, did not my well-grounded Apprehensions of a future State persuade me that 'twas better, much better to *endure a light Affliction for a Moment*, than to *drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, that is pour'd out without Mixture into the Cup of his Indignation, and to be tormented with Fire and Brimstone in the Presence of the holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb* *.

If

* Rev. xiv. 10.

If he therefore that wills the End, wills SERM. III.
also the Means to that End; and the only
Means that can enforce a just Obedience
to God's Laws, is the Expectation of a fu-
ture State; God must as necessarily have
design'd a future State, as he has design'd
his own Laws to be observ'd.

While we form an Idea of God as a Go-
vernor, can we conceive that a Being en-
dowed with sufficient Power and Wisdom,
to the last degree tender of his Honour,
and jealous of his Majesty, should in the
strictest Manner imaginable prescribe a Sy-
stem of Laws to be practised by his Subjects,
and never deviated from on any account
whatever; and yet these Subjects should all
their Life-long not only live in the utmost
Contempt of these Laws, but even make
their Happiness arise from the Contempt of
them, and then at last escape without
any notice being taken of their Behaviour?
No; depend on't, Men will never be suf-
fer'd thus *to do what is good in their own*
Eyes, but when there is no King in Israel.

The Reason of our being created was for
God's Glory, either voluntarily to shew forth
his Power and Majesty by observing his
Laws, or to be forc'd at last to submit to

F

what-

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whatever he in his *Anger* shall think fit to exact from us for the Non-observance of 'em. But for what End could we imagine God should create Men? or what a tame, unconcern'd *Epicurean* God, must we take our Almighty to be, who could suffer Rebels, that daily denied his Authority, to be in as much Security as his most dutiful Subjects?

2dly, These never-ending Torments may be preventive also on another account, and that is with respect to the other rational Parts of the Creation, who may by this Means be the better secured in their Duty and Obedience to their Maker. For as *the Angels, which kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation, are reserv'd in everlasting Chains under Darknefs**, to deter us from being guilty of the like Crimes, so may impenitent Men also be set forth as a standing Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire † to warn all other Beings, that either then are, or hereafter may be created, how dreadful a thing it is to fall into the Hands of the Living God ‡! Now, both these Accounts, namely, that God's Honour may be vindicated, and the Wicked be a constant Example, does the

* Jude 6. † Jude 7. ‡ Heb. x. 31.

the Scripture seem to point at, when it declares this Punishment is openly to be executed in the *Presence of the Holy Angels, as well as of the Lamb*, Rev. xiv. 10. SERM. III.

'Tis therefore necessary that God should call the Impenitent to account: But must he therefore inflict on them *eternal* Punishments? *That* indeed, is not discoverable by Reason, but Reason can furnish us with several Considerations to justify, what Revelation alone hath made known unto us. For,

1st, One of the great Ends of punishing, being to deter from offending, that Punishment appears to be most proper to be annex'd as a Sanction to the Law, which is in all Probability most proper to answer its End. Now, where the Inclination to Sin is very violent, the Penalty, in Proportion, ought doubtless to be extremely severe. This is the natural Notion of Mankind, who in all Societies endeavour to secure the Observation of their Laws, tho' the subject Matter of them be in themselves of no great Consequence, even by the Death of the Transgressors.

Now, if the Fears even of eternal Anguish itself very often fail to make Men vir-

SERM. III. tuous, how disproportionate to their End must the Expectations of any less Repentments have been found? This made our celebrated Preacher himself confess, that
 “ could any thing more terrible have been
 “ threatened to the Workers of Iniquity, it
 “ had not been unreasonable; because it
 “ would all have been little enough to deter
 “ Men effectually from Sin *.”

’Tis probable, such is the Degeneracy of Mankind, that most of those who shall be so happy as to hear the joyful Invitation of their Lord, *Come ye blessed of my Father*, owe their coming thither, to these terrible Denunciations. To good Men therefore these dreadful Threatnings are the greatest Mercies, since had not they fear’d the becoming so *very* miserable, they had never become so *very* happy. So true with respect to God, is the Reverse of what is observ’d of wicked Men, that as their very *Mercies* are *Cruelties*, his very *Severities* in their own Tendency, are the greatest *Mercies*.

2dly, There does seem to be some Proportion between the Crimes and the Punishment of the Damn’d, for as on one side, the Party offending is not only the meanest Creature,

* Tillotson, Fol. Vol. I. p. 412.

Creature, and most strictly the Subject of SERM. III.

him whose Law he transgresses, but even owes his very Being, and receives every thing he either has, or can enjoy from his Hands, the very Thoughts by which he conceives Iniquity, the Will by which he chuses Evil, the Tongue with which he blasphemes, and the Hands with which he worketh Wickedness: So on the other side, the offended Party is not only his Lord and Governor in every Sense, by which that Title can be acquir'd, but his very God, and Saviour! The greatest! the purest! and the holiest Being! So Great, so Pure, and Holy, that nought but his own Omniscience can form a full Idea of his other Excellencies, and at the same Time, the most kind, beneficent, and long suffering Being, that even a Son could reasonably wish for in the Person of a Father. This Being, whom we have all imaginable Obligations not to affront in the *least*, Sinners affront even in the *greatest* Manner that 'tis possible, and do those very Things, which he sent his Son to die, that they *might* not, and which that very Son by his Death requested, that they *would* not do.

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If therefore impenitent Sinners are guilty of the greatest Offence, that human Nature is capable of committing; shall it be deem'd unjust in God, if he inflicts the greatest Penalty which that Nature is capable of suffering? All impenitent Sinners are guilty of the greatest Offence their Nature is capable of committing, which is that of the meanest and most oblig'd Subjects turning Rebels to the greatest and best of Kings, and in that they all agree; but as the Circumstances, or the Aggravations and Repetitions very much in degree increase, tho' not alter the general Nature of their Offence: so hath Almighty God decreed that they shall all suffer a Punishment in some Sense, the same as to its Nature, *i. e.* Eternal, or of the same endless Duration, tho' the Intensity of the Torments shall vary according to the different Degrees of Demerit in the Transgressors.

I am now,

III. Thirdly, To answer some Objections brought against this Doctrine; tho' in order the better to guard and clear those Reflections I have used to support the Argument with, I hope I have in a great Measure already cas'd myself of that Labour. I will only therefore

therefore endeavour to remove one Difficulty, SERM. III.
that remains to be consider'd by itself.

'Tis a very common, and no less plausible Objection they offer, who complain, that 'tis exceeding hard Men should be punish'd with *eternal* Torments for the Commission of *temporary* Offences. And so perhaps it might, if the Time was really either any part of our Sin, or our Suffering, but that 'tis impossible it should be, Duration or Continuance strictly speaking, being nothing but a mere Idea of abstract Quality, which can neither constitute, nor alter the Nature of any thing, but is a necessary Consequent and Attendant upon the Nature of every Thing. Offences may have the same degree of Malignity in them, whether the Perpetration of 'em takes up three Minutes, or as many Years. The Heinousness of their Nature not arising from the Time in which they were perform'd, but from the joint Considerations of the offending, and the offended Party, and what Reasons there were for a different Conduct.

The greatest Indignity a Man can offer Heaven, is the having a Mind intirely abandon'd to Wickedness, and that does not retain the least Respect for, or Obedi-

SERM. III.

ence to God, or his Commands. But whether this happens in a less or greater Time is perfectly accidental, and not at all to the Purpose. Now the greatest Indignity to Heaven certainly deserves the greatest Repentments of Heaven. The greatest Sort of Punishment is constantly to continue in Punishment. Eternal Torments therefore are not threaten'd upon their own account, or because Eternity bears any Relation or Proportion barely in itself to the Nature of the Offence; but because eternal Punishments are the greatest Punishments, and the greatest Punishments have a Relation to the greatest Offences. 'Tis therefore not at all necessary that the Time in which we suffer, should be equal to the Time in which we sin; because what was at first in no wise the Cause of the *One*, can never afterwards become the Rule of the *Other*.

Agreeable to these Sentiments has been the Practice of all Mankind, who punish Offenders with Banishment for Life, nay, even with Death itself (which is a Punishment in some Sense Eternal, since it for ever deprives them of all the Benefits of Life) for Faults committed in an Instant.

I come now,

IV. Fourthly, To shew what Influence this Doctrine ought to have on our Lives and Conversations. And,

Ist, Let us always keep this Doctrine before our Eyes, as the surest Basis and Foundation whereon to build a sincere Obedience. For to this very End did God Almighty threaten these dreadful Tortures, that the Fear of them might restrain us from deserving them.

I know it has been the Policy of those who believe nothing of them, but do not think it convenient openly to declare themselves, to persuade us that the Fear of Hell is by no Means a proper Motive to Religion. They would teach us more exalted and elevated Notions of adhering to Virtue for Virtue's sake; of being engag'd by contemplating the internal Beauty, Order and Propriety there is in doing what is just and becoming.

Thus by mixing misapplied Scriptures with false Reasoning, they would reduce us from the rational Hopes and Fears of Christians, to the chimerical Ideas of a Stoic, which were never design'd for any other Use than to be talk'd of. For, not to mention that these sublime and airy Notions are perfectly

SERM. III. fectly unintelligible, and consequently, useless to the Bulk of Mankind, who are all equally concern'd in Religion, they are inconsistent with the present State of human Nature.

I own there is a Beauty and a Comeliness in acting agreeably to the Dictates of right Reason, and a Pleasure arising to any rational Being, from reflecting that it has proceeded according to this Standard; which Pleasure is a Motive to engage it in such a Conduct. But then the Mind that is to be thus influenc'd, ought to be at Liberty to view this beautiful Order of Things, and to enjoy the Contemplation of it, disengag'd from the more alluring, because nearer Inticements that offer themselves from another Quarter, and undisturb'd by those present Pains or approaching Difficulties, which quite take her off from the compos'd Prospect of that beautiful Scene, which can only move us when we are at leisure calmly and securely to view it.

This soft and still Voice of Nature, like that still *Voice of God* *, which was not heard during the Continuance of *the Thunderings and the Lightnings*, can never be constantly

and

* 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

and effectually attended to among the Tumults and Misfortunes of this World. The Fault does not lie on the Side of Virtue, nor is it any Blemish cast on that which is in itself sufficiently fit to recommend itself to a rational Being; but 'tis the Weakness of Mankind, who are not perfect enough in this frail Condition of Mortality to be drawn by the Beauty of that alone, without some other Assistance.

God indeed is every way qualify'd to direct himself after this manner; and the Pleasure that Angels find in acting rightly, is a Reward *for*, and may therefore be a Motive *of*, their acting so. And so it may be with us, when we become like the Angels. But the Way to be so, is to possess our Minds with so thorough a Sense of God's Judgments, that we may take care never to incur his fierce Displeasure.

However true this is, some of our incautious Brethren, whose warm Temper suggests to them high and extravagant Flights concerning Faith, and the Love of God, have suffer'd their Enemies, who meant neither them nor Religion any Service, to draw them off from this grand Security of a religious Life, under the Notion of its being

SERM. III. a slavish Fear, and that *perfect Love excludes Fear*. But we have not so learn'd Christ, who "advises us to fear God, who after he " bath killed, bath Power to cast both Soul " and Body into Hell-fire." For tho' Love is the Perfection of Religion, a just Fear of displeasing God, and falling under his Indignation, is both the first Beginning and the best Preserver of it.

And as the Apprehension of a future State is a proper Ground for Religion, so the Eternity of that State must certainly be the most proper. For Fear being a proper Motive to influence our Will, the greatest Fear must consequently be the most proper Motive to engage us to work out our Salvation.

I might add further, that the *Fear* mention'd in the Text, which is excluded by *perfect Love*, is the Fear of suffering upon the Account of Religion, and so does not at all relate to their Purpose who quote it. But,

2dly, It will be in vain for us to believe this Doctrine, nay, and to own it as the most proper Foundation of our Obedience, if we do not actually let it work that Effect in us. Our Knowledge will but increase our

Damnation, and render us worthy to be *beaten with many Stripes.* *Ob! that we would consider, think of these things, and shew ourselves Men,* Creatures endow'd with Reason and Reflection. How trifling and inconsiderable are the Pleasures of this Life, for which we barter our eternal Happiness, and plunge ourselves into everlasting Misery! Let us appeal to the Men of refin'd Taste, who pretend to enjoy this World in the most exquisite Manner, free from the Remorses of Conscience and the uneasy Apprehensions of an Hereafter; and we shall even find them in a little Time so tir'd with the dull nauseous Round of the same insipid and unmanly Entertainments, that they cannot bear to stay out the Time Nature has allotted them, but rather chuse to hurry themselves they know not whither, than live and be thus miserably happy.

I believe I shall have these two Observations granted me; on the one hand, that the Men of Thought and Reflection, that have the Misfortune to believe very little of Religion, are, generally speaking, by no means the chearfullest and easiest of Mankind; and, on the other hand, that those who profess themselves Men of Pleasure, have
much

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SERM. III. much less of it than they who follow their Duty and their Business. And if so, how monstrously unreasonable are those Men who thrust themselves into Hell-fire hereafter, and chuse to *dwell with everlasting Burnings*, because they are resolv'd to enjoy the glorious Liberty of making themselves wretched and contemptible here! May these Thoughts work in us a Repentance not to be repented of, that we may avoid falling under all the *Curses written in the Book*, and have our Lot among those on *the Right Hand*, to whom our King, Christ Jesus, shall say: *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Beginning of the World. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; for inasmuch as ye did unto these my Brethren, ye did it unto me.*





SERMON IV.

*The NECESSITY of Keeping
the WHOLE LAW.*

JAMES ii. 10.

*Whoſoever ſhall Keep the Whole Law, and
yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.*

IS the diſtinguiſhing Character of SERM. IV.
Christianity above all other Reli-
gions, and what we juſtly look
upon as one of the internal Evi-
dences of its Truth, that it never adapts
its ſelf to our corrupt Humours and vitious
Inclinations, never ſtoops to make itſelf
Friends, by gratifying our irregular Appe-
tites,

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tites, but with such an Authority as no Impostor could ever boast of, and with the greatest Plainness, delivers to us such Rules as every way becomes an allwise God to give, and Mankind to practise.

Mahometanism may address itself to our Passions, and bribe our Belief with the full Allowance of all sensual Pleasures *here*, and the Promise of a brutal Paradise *hereafter*; but 'tis Christianity alone that can rely so much on its own Strength, as to challenge our Assent whilst it bids us renounce every darling Vice, and *the Sin which does so easily beset us* *.

Hence it was that our Blessed Saviour, who *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it* †, took such particular Care to repair those Breaches, which Men of corrupt Practises had made by their Interpretations, in the Laws of God, which he explained in the strictest Sense, and assured his Disciples that he expected that their *Righteousness should exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharises* ‡, and that they should *be perfect even as their Father which was in Heaven was perfect* ||.

But

* Heb. xii. 1. † Matt. v. 17. ‡ Matt. v. 20.
|| Matt. v. 48.

But the Hypocritical *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were not only guilty of the grossest Wickedness, by affixing their own false Meaning to the plainest Laws of God, but by usurping to themselves a Power too, even of repealing, and making void those very Laws, whilst they endeavoured to persuade Men that an entire and uniform Submission to all the divine Precepts was not absolutely necessary; but that it would be sufficient to pay Obedience to some of God's Laws without being over nice and scrupulous about the Observation of the Rest. To this pernicious Error, St. *James* in his Epistle to the *dispersed Jews*, opposes himself; and as Christ had formerly shewn in what Sense the several Laws of God were to be *understood*, the Apostles here asserts that they are equally obligatory; and that the Omission of some, would by no Means be attoned for by the Performance of others. These new Converts, it seems, did still so far *Judaize*, as to believe that if they followed Christ's Directions in the main, some Distinction might nevertheless be shewn to the Rich and Great; and that a little Partiality for them, in Cases of Judicature, would be over-looked by God, as

G

wherein

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wherein they did not greatly do amiss. The Apostles therefore from divers Considerations shews 'em the Unjustifiableness of their Practice, and the Vanity of such their Imaginations, and concludes his Reasoning on this Point, with an Argument drawn from the Necessity of paying an intire Obedience to all the Laws of God, for *who-so-ever shall Keep the Whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.*

In discoursing farther, on which Words I shall endeavour,

First, To explain the Doctrine laid down in my Text.

Secondly, Shew the Reasonableness of it. And

Thirdly, Conclude with some Observations on the Whole.

I. First, then, I shall endeavour to explain the Doctrine laid down in my Text.

That we should be absolutely free from all Infirmities, never fall into any Sin thro' Inadvertency, nor be betray'd into any Irregularities by the Hurry of our Passions, is a Happiness to be wished for, rather than expected. 'Tis our *Misfortune* at present to be of such a Frame, as that upon the whole, it is morally impossible for us,

at least, not to be guilty of some SERM. IV.
 Failings in our Duty, tho' at the same
 Time, 'tis our *Fault* too; since there is no
 Sin in particular, but 'tis at least naturally
 possible for us to avoid it. But certainly
 the *offending* in *such Points* can never be
 what was aimed at by the Apostle in the
 Text, nor for Offences of this Nature will
 God be extreme to look upon us as *guilty of*
the Whole Law. Far be that from a good
 and gracious God; far from a merciful and
 kind Redeemer, for *who then could be saved?*
 Sure there is a Difference between the
 Righteous and the Wicked: But in this
 Sense, who is Righteous? or who can say
 he never has sinned? To say nothing at
 present of God's Justice in this Case, 'tis
 plain the new Covenant could never be call-
 ed a Covenant of Grace and Mercy, and
 superabundant Love, if the Conditions it
 requires are not far from being impossible
 to be performed.

The Nature of Sin consists in an Opposi-
 tion of the Will of Man to the Will of
 God: When therefore, either thro' Weak-
 ness, Inadvertency, or Surprise, we are
 guilty of an irregular Action, in which the
 Will has very little or no Share, we are rather

SERM. IV. to be pitied than condemn'd; and such an Action ought to be looked on as rather the Effect of our original Sin, than as an actual Crime. And as we derive this guilty Weakness from a Sin in some Sense not our own, so will the Imputation be taken off by the Righteousness and Sufferings of our dear Redeemer. In short, the only Danger that can arise to us on account of the before-mention'd Faults, is from our denial of them, or from our not asking of God a general Forgiveness for them. *If we say that we have no Sin, (says St. John,) we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us; if we confess our Sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness; if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us, 1 John i. 8, 9, 10.* Well therefore, says the Holy Psalmist, *who can tell how oft he offendeth, cleanse thou me from my secret Faults, Psal. xix. 12.* The Sins then, that St. James must here be understood to mean, are those Breaches of the *Royal Law*, as 'tis call'd, ver. 8. of this Chapter, that is, *thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, which Law has that distinguishing Title on account of its peculiar

liar Excellency, as it governs and moderates SERM. IV.
 most other Laws, especially the *ceremonial*
 and *positive* Laws, which are still to give
 Place to that of Charity and Mercy.

This appears farther from those Sins he
 instances in, and that which more particu-
 larly gave occasion to this Discourse. For
 v. 11. says he, *he that said, do not commit A-*
dultery, said also, do not kill. Where Mur-
 der and Adultery are the Instances he makes
 use of, in order to illustrate and establish
 his Doctrine; and the Sin, which the A-
 postle particularly aimed at in this Chapter,
 was notorious Injustice and flagrant Partiali-
 ty in judicial Causes, which is figuratively,
 and in allusion to the Customs of the *Jews*
 in their Courts of Judicature, expressed by
 the Differences of Places and Postures, as-
 sign'd to the two contending Parties; *for if*
there come into your Courts (saith the Apostle,
 v. 2.) *a Man with a Gold Ring, in goodly Ap-*
parel, and come in also a poor Man in vile Rai-
ment; and ye have Respect to him that wear-
eth the gay Clothing, and say unto him, sit
thou here in a good Place, and say to the poor
Man, standt thou there, or sit here under my Foot-
stool; are ye not then partial in your selves,
and are become Judges of Evil Thoughts? The
 G 3 *offending,*

SERM. IV. *offending, therefore, in one Point, that will make a Man guilty of the whole Law, is a direct Violation of those great Laws of Nature and Christianity, as they stand opposed to the lesser Sins of Weakness and Infirmary: and in what Sense then it can be said, that one Crime can make us guilty of the whole Law, will not be very difficult to determine; for as the Performance of the whole Law, is the Observance of an entire Obedience; so the being guilty of the Whole Law consists in the violation of that entire Obedience, and the Contempt shewn thereby of God's Authority: But as our Obedience does as really cease to be entire, and his Authority is as really despised, by the breach of one Law as of many, so he that offends in one Point, is as really guilty of the Whole Law, as if he had broke every Precept in it.*

But this leads me to the second Thing proposed, namely, to shew the Reasonableness of the Apostle's Doctrine. In order, therefore, to make that appear,

The First Consideration I shall make use of, ought, out of Respect to him, and for its own Strength, to be that which he himself mentions in the Verse immediately following

lowing my Text; for *be that said, do not* SERM. IV.
commit Adultery, said also, do not kill; now
if thou commit not Adultery, yet if thou kill,
thou art become a Transgressor of the Law;
 as if he should have said, the Reason which
 makes either Murder or Adultery to be a
 Sin, is its being contrary to God's Com-
 mandment. If, therefore, what makes all
 Sin unlawful, is God's forbidding it, and if
 at the same Time he has equally forbid eve-
 ry Sin, it must plainly follow, that the be-
 ing guilty of any one Sin, must as really
 and truly denominate a Man a Transgressor,
 as if he had been found guilty of all, be-
 cause the Reason is the same, tho' not in the
 same degree in both Cases. We see here
 the Apostle enforces his Doctrine by a Rea-
 son drawn from the Consideration of Man's
 Subjection, with respect to God his Gover-
 nor; which certainly is the only Way by
 which we can form a true Judgment of the
 Nature of Sin and Obedience. By his
 creating us, he has the most full and proper
 Authority over us, and by consequence there
 lies the utmost Obligation upon us, to ob-
 serve and perform whatever that Authority
 enjoins us; which to refuse, is the utmost
 Contempt that a Creature can shew his
 G 4 Creator;

SERM. IV. Creator; and is *in effect* a down-right Denial of his being created by him, as 'tis a Denial of that Authority, which necessarily results from it. Now the Commission of never so many Sins does but imply a Contempt of our Maker's Commands; and that is implied too, even in one single Sin. As 'tis the Contempt, therefore, of our Creator, that subjects us to eternal Torments, we shall be as surely damned for living presumptuously in any *one* known Sin, however strict and severe we are in every other Part of our Conduct, as if we had indulged ourselves in a thousand criminal Liberties and Excesses.

II. Secondly, Another Argument, that may persuade us to the Reasonableness and indispensable Necessity of practising an entire Submission to all God's Laws, is, that a contrary Conduct is a sort of Idolatry. As the Man who lives without a God in the World, whether he disowns him in his Professions or his Behaviour, will equally deserve the Character of an Atheist; so he who in his Practice makes to himself Gods, will be deemed an Idolater, tho' in his Principles he acknowledges none other but the true one. For the same Reasoning that
makes

makes a *total* Disobedience practical *Atheism*, SERM. IV.
 will prove a *partial* Obedience to be practical *Idolatry*. For that Sin chiefly consists in acknowledging any Thing to have a Power over us contrary to and inconsistent with the Power of God, or such as does not depend upon it. Hence the Heathens were all of them accounted guilty of that Sin, whether they worshipped one God or many, because they all trusted in, and submitted to, what had no Right or Title to such their Reliance and Submission.

God has positively declared he never will give his *Glory to another*. But notwithstanding this, this *Glory* does every one rob him of, and by Consequence this *Idolatry* is every one guilty of, that gives only Part of his Heart to God Almighty, when the whole of it is his just Due and Right. For whatever shares any Part of our Obedience with the Almighty, whether it be *the World, the Flesh, or the Devil*, is so far our God, and so far do we acknowledge its Power over us. Well therefore might the Apostle caution us against *Covetousness, which is Idolatry* *; and the same Title may we give to any other Vice, which leads us into *Captivity to the Law*

* Col. iii. 5.

SERM. IV. *Law of Sin* *. Uncleanness, Drunkenness, Disobedience and Revenge; every unlawful Passion which we gratify, every lustful Inclination that gains our Heart, lo! these are the Gods we worship.

We justly abominate that antient Heresy which ascribed the Creation of all Things to two Principles, the one good, and the other evil; but we still are guilty of a greater Absurdity, if, while we disown it in our Principles, we allow it in our Practice. The Foundation of our Obedience is the Relation we stand in to God of Creatures to their Creator, and of Subjects to their Lord. And as the Scriptures have taught us that *where there is a Master, there should be Service*; so Reason assures us that where we pay Service, there is our Master. Impossible it is in the Nature of the Thing, strictly speaking, to be the Servant of two Masters; *for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other* †: But never so plainly impossible, as when the two Masters happen to be *God and Mammon*.

III. Thirdly, Another Reason why God must and will so strictly insist on a perfect Obe-

* Rom. vii. 23. † Matth. vi. 24.

Obedience is, that nothing else can demonstrate that our Conduct is grounded on a sincere and true Love to him; that all our Pretences to Godliness are any thing but Hypocrisy; and that our best Actions do not proceed from Vanity or Inclination. For since the Reason against all Sin is the same, namely, God's Prohibition, if a Person had Respect to that, when he abstains from an ill Action, and that Consideration is the only Cause which can make his abstaining virtuous, it would have the same Influence in every other Part of his Conduct. The Man who is never guilty of telling a Lie, but would murder any one that should impute that Vice to him, sufficiently discovers that his Veracity does not proceed from a Sense of Religion, which can only make it a Virtue; for then surely he would never be guilty of a Breach of it in a more flaming Instance. No, 'tis his mistaken Honour that is the Spring of all his Actions. But how then, may I ask, with our Saviour, *can he believe, and be saved, who receives Honour from Men, and seeks not that Honour that comes from God only* * ?

In vain does the Voluptuary endeavour to make a Merit of his Charities and Humanity, whilst

* John v. 44.

SERM. IV. whilst he indulges himself in the greatest Excesses of forbidden Pleasures. His real Sins, and his supposed Virtues, are view'd in the same Light by the Eyes of Heaven, as they arise from a Desire to please himself, and not the Almighty. His Nature melts at the Sight of Misery, and by a secret Sympathy feeling what it sees, relieves itself rather than the afflicted Sufferer. From whence we may conclude, that he may indeed have a happier Constitution, not more Virtue than his colder Neighbours.

The young Man in the Gospel did very groundlessly imagine himself secure of God's Favour; because in the general Course of Life he had *kept the Commandments*, when at Christ's bidding him *sell all he had*, his Courage and Religion fail'd him, and *he went away sorrowful*. If we would, like *David*, be Men *after God's own Heart*; we must, like him, *have Respect to all God's Commandments*.

Thirdly and lastly, Give me leave to make one or two Inferences from the foregoing Discourse. And,

1st, If he that keeps the Whole Law, and is guilty but of one Sin, shall be deemed guilty of all; how shameful is it for a Man
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who hath made a great Progress in Religion, to lose all his Pains and Care, by gratifying himself in one Instance, when he has denied himself in a Thousand! How much must it increase the Terrors of another State, and heighten our Anguish to the last degree, to think how near we were to Heaven, and yet lost it! How must we be abash'd to see our hypocritical Pretences to Religion detected! And how must we be amazed to find the Devil claiming *all* of us hereafter, by our giving him a *Part* of us here! Even the common Pretences of more thorough-pac'd Sinners, this Man cannot lay hold of; he cannot plead that he thought Virtue impracticable, since in many Instances his own Practice would be an Answer to his Plea; nor can he pretend that an entire Want of religious Consideration, and being wholly taken up with the Things of this World, was the Occasion of his fatal Miscarriage; since his regular Conduct in other Parts of his Life demonstrates that want of Reflection could not be his Misfortune. No, he must have been *enlighten'd*, and in several Cases have *tasted of the heavenly Gift* of God's Grace, and have *been made Partaker of the Assistances of the Holy*

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*Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; and yet all this must now alas be in vain, and to no other Purpose, but that his Crime may be aggravated by his Virtues, and that the one Sin he has indulged himself in, may become two, by the Addition of Ingratitude for not longer entertaining that Holy Spirit, which had already so often worked in him both to will and to do Things well pleasing to the Lord. On these Accounts we may justly apply to him the Words of St. Peter, and say, If after he had in a great Measure escaped the Pollutions of the World, through the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he is still entangled and overcome, the latter End is worse with him than the Beginning. For it had been better for him not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after he had known it, to turn from the holy Commandment deliver'd unto him * !*

2dly, If such a perfect uniform Obedience is requir'd, that he that lives in one Sin shall be deemed guilty of all, *who then* (may the careless Sinner say) *will be saved?* If so strait is the Gate, and so narrow is the Path that leads to Life, no Wonder he will imagine if there be but few that find it. Where then

* 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

then are the Mercies of the New Covenant, where the gracious Promises made to us Christians? Yes, if it be not our own Fault, we shall still find the *sure Mercies of David*. *With Men* indeed, *i. e.* by mere human Strength, *these things are not possible, but with God*, *i. e.* by the Divine Assistance, *all things are possible*. Our gracious Governor never imposes a Duty, but he supplies us with a proportionable Ability to practise it; nor shall we find in him an *Egyptian* Task-master, who will exact from us more than he has given us Power to perform. Strict, indeed, is our Religion, and severe and holy are its Precepts; they wou'd otherwise be unbecoming the Purity of that Being who enjoin'd them: But then great are the Assistances, and powerful the Influences of the Holy Spirit; it wou'd else be inconsistent with the abundant Goodness of that dear Redeemer, that died to save us. By the former Case our God has consulted the Honour of his own Attributes, and in the latter reconciled 'em with our Security! Every Religion, from the very Nature of the Thing, must be in some Sense a Yoke; but of all, Christianity is the most *easy* one, and tho' it be a *Burthen*, it must be acknowledg'd

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to be a *light* one; free from the Cruelties of the *Heathen* Idolaters, the Incumbrances of the *Jewish* Ceremonies, and the Uncertainties and Want of Assistance that Natural Religion labour'd under. We are indeed liable to be overcome by every Temptation, and are not able of ourselves either to will or to do what is good, but through Christ that is in us. We may still come off *more than Conquerors*. Let us not therefore be discouraged, nor admit of any other *Fear and Trembling*, but what is necessary to *work out our Salvation*. For if in one Light we view our Judge as strict and severe against all the *Workers of Iniquity*, in another we may consider him as one that has himself been touch'd with human Infirmities, that will accept the Will, if it be sincerely intended, for the Deed; and that will not *suffer our Labour to be in vain in the Lord*.

3dly and lastly, If the Danger of indulging ourselves in any *one* Sin be so great, and if at the same time 'tis natural for all of us to have some Bosom Sin, some favourite Vice, which, by its Agreeableness to our Constitution, Temper, or present Interests, steals upon us, and almost imperceptibly recommends itself to us; if this be
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so I say, how much Reason have we to ^{SERM. IV.} bless God's Providence, and admire the Care of our excellent Church which has set apart this solemn Season of the Year, on Purpose that we may more narrowly look into our own Hearts, and consider even of the very Springs and Motives of all our Actions! None but an abandoned Wretch will openly go on in a *Course* of Impieties, and a Man of *but common* Integrity will be shocked at the Commission of a glaring Crime, but the greatest Hazard we stand liable too, is, lest amidst the Business and Diversions of this World, we should not sufficiently guard our selves against those Vices, which either from the Force of Custom, or the near Resemblance they have to some Virtues, creep upon us while we sleep, and think our selves secure. Our Holy Mother now calls upon us to awaken from our Slumbers, and impartially to examine our own Consciences. Let us not therefore neglect these Means of working out our Salvation which the divine Providence has offer'd to us. For what *before* might perhaps be extenuated by the Plea of Inadvertency, will *now* become a wilful Transgression. Whereas if we fail not to make

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SERM. IV. the intended Use of this holy Season, we may hope, through the divine Assistance, to become perfect in every good Word and Work here, and present our selves as holy and spotless before our Father hereafter, as our frail Mortality will admit of, as he who gave it us, expects we should be. *To whom, &c.*

F I N I S.



